AFRICA RECOVERY

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Kofi Annan calls for 'new African unity of purpose'

Secretary-General, in Africa, stresses link between peace and development

By **Margaret A. Novicki**

Many African countries have made remarkable economic and social progress in recent years, but the continent cannot consolidate these gains and improve its international image until its conflicts are settled. To this end, Africa's people and leaders must continue to work with "a new African unity of purpose." This was UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message during his 19-27 March trip to Africa, his first official visit since taking office in January.

"In recent years, in one country after another – in Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, and now Zaire – Africa has been in crisis. Ordinary Africans – especially women and children – have paid a terrible price for political instability, division and regional hostilities," he told the 26 March summit meeting of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Lomé, Togo. "But we know things are changing," the Secretary-General said, applauding the efforts of 14 African heads of state and government who gathered in Lomé to tackle the situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly Zaire (see page 3). "We are beginning to end the stereotype of Africa as a continent in crisis, a house divided against itself."

Mr. Annan brought diplomatic pressure to bear on the government and rebels in Zaire to bring them to the negotiating table, and also on the remaining stumbling blocks to peace in Angola. He succeeded in both cases: in Angola, he broke an impasse over the participation of members of the opposition National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in the unified National Assembly and Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. And at the Lomé summit, Mr. Annan and African leaders secured a commitment from the government of Zaire and the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) to the principle of a ceasefire and negotiations.

UN/ Milton Grant

Secretary-General Kofi Annan with President Nelson Mandela of South Africa during his nine-day Africa trip.

The Secretary-General has made settling Africa's conflicts a priority because "economic and social development and stability can only follow a stable political climate," he told a group of journalists at UN headquarters on the eve of his departure to Africa. As long as there is war, all the countries of the region suffer from a negative image as "conflict-torn," Mr. Annan said.

This masks the fact that many countries have made very significant economic and social progress in recent years. In this context, he emphasized his support for the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched in March 1996 as a decade-long drive to coordinate all UN efforts in support of the continent's basic development objectives. The Special Initiative "must

turn to page 7

Debt relief prospects worry African ministers

World Bank/IMF seek to reassure at ECA conference

By **Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill**

Addis Ababa

Voicing deep concerns, African finance ministers have called for more flexible application of the new Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief deal. They say "as many reforming African countries as possible" should have access to the HIPC package and urge the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to make the six years of tough eligibility conditions shorter and less restrictive. The HIPC deal aims to reduce debts of eligible countries to "sustainable" levels.

At a 31 March-2 April conference in Addis Ababa, held by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the ministers called for more rapid debt reduction for countries with a "demonstrated record of strong performance over a long period."

This was a reference to Uganda which, on 23 April, became the first country to get an HIPC deal (see page 10). Uganda welcomed the debt relief, which will come in April 1998. It had earlier expressed disappointment at not getting debt relief this year, despite assurances of a 1997 date by the Bank and Fund. Oxfam, a UK-based non-governmental organization, has charged that the Bank

turn to page 12

SPECIAL REPORTS:
Special Initiative on Africa
pages 18-21
ECA ministers' conference
pages 12-15

AFRICA RECOVERY

United Nations
Vol. 10 No. 4 January - April 1997

Cover Story

Secretary-General in Africa stresses link between peace and development

Debt relief prospects worry African ministers at Economic Commission for Africa conference

ECA analyzes concerns over HIPC package 12
Forward movement at the ECA 14

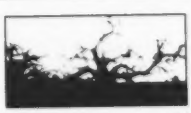
Also in this issue

Zaire war widens regional emergencies 3
Somalis build peace from grassroots up 6
High-level Panel views Africa's progress 8
Africa resists new trade conditionalities 9
Debt relief delay for poorest countries 10
Views from Uganda and World Bank 10-11
Africa is World Bank's 'top priority' 16
Lomé Convention under tough scrutiny 17
UNHCR confronts refugee challenge 22
Uneven progress for African women 24
Africa advances its micro-credit agenda 26
Drylands funding still unresolved 27

The UN Special Initiative on Africa — one year later 18-21

Departments

Agenda 29
Books 29



Baobab 28
Briefs 30
Watch 32

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Zaire war widens regional emergency

UN appeals for aid to 1.4 million people in crisis-stricken Great Lakes

By **Ernest Harsch** with **Ahunna Eziakonwa**

As the war in eastern Zaire spreads west towards Kinshasa, the capital, and while Burundi and other neighbouring countries continue to be stricken by armed conflict and massive refugee movements, the United Nations on 19 March launched an appeal for $324.5 mn to meet the emergency humanitarian needs of more than 1.4 million people in the Great Lakes region.

Meanwhile, the UN, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and a number of African governments have been urging the Zairian protagonists to sit down and talk. They insist that a ceasefire – or, failing that, a negotiated change in government – would greatly facilitate international relief efforts and minimize further regional instability. The opening of direct talks between the Zairian government and the rebel forces over the weekend of 4-5 April in South Africa, with joint UN/OAU Special Representative Mohamed Sahnoun serving as a mediator, was the first significant step in that direction.

"If we don't manage the change in Zaire, we may lose control of it," UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned on 16 April. To prevent the conflict from spiralling out of control, he urged "transitional arrangements in Zaire and eventually elections."

Dramatically underlining the humanitarian crisis in Zaire, relief organizations have been reporting alarmingly high death rates among refugees and displaced persons. In just the last two weeks of March, at least 500 Rwandese refugees in the Zairian village of Ubilo died of hunger and disease, according to the Zairian Red Cross. In village after village, reported a field representative of Refugees International, a non-governmental organization (NGO), "I saw the most emaciated children I've ever seen in my life." Local field officers of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have described the situation as "catastrophic," reporting early April death rates of up to 120 a day in two makeshift camps south of Kisangani.

Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the High Commissioner for Refugees, urged the Zairian rebel forces who have taken control of most of eastern Zaire to open up humanitarian corridors, to allow the tens of thousands of Rwandese refugees trapped by the fighting to return home. "They are malnourished, traumatized and stricken with diseases," Mrs. Ogata said. "They have told us they want to end their agony and return to Rwanda." (Also see interview with Mrs. Ogata, pages 20-21.)

UNHCR, other UN agencies and NGOs have appealed to the rebel coalition to allow a UN airlift of some 100,000 malnourished Rwandese refugees back to their country. As of mid-April, agreement had not been reached.

UNHCR © SAMS

Rwandese refugees at the Amisi camp in eastern Zaire: most want to return home.

Regional appeal

Because the situation in Zaire and neighbouring countries is highly fluid, with rapid shifts in both battlelines and affected populations, the UN emergency appeal takes a regional approach, to allow material and humanitarian aid personnel to be transferred at short notice to areas of greatest need. The changing situation in Zaire in particular, said the appeal, demands "a flexible and creative response from humanitarian agencies and their counterparts."

Covering the period January-December 1997, the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Great Lakes Emergency was prepared by UN agencies and NGOs operating in the region. It aims to provide food, medicine, shelter and other emergency assistance to refugees, internally displaced people and returnees in Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (see table, page 4).

The bulk of the appeal's funds will be allocated to UNHCR ($116 mn), the World Food Programme ($145.5 mn) and UNICEF ($35 mn), with the remainder going to another half-dozen agencies. At the request of the Rwandese government, that country's humanitarian needs were not included in the consolidated appeal, and it is negotiating separately with UNHCR and other agencies for assistance to returning refugees.

Fighting disrupts relief efforts

The rebellion in eastern Zaire, which began in October, pits a coalition known as the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) against the government of President Mobutu Sese Seko, who has ruled Zaire for 32 years. Since February, the ADFL, led by Mr. Laurent Désiré Kabila, has very rapidly seized an ever-growing swath of territory in the country's eastern, central and south-

ern regions, as undisciplined government troops first engaged in widespread looting and then fled in the face of advancing rebel forces. By mid-April, the ADFL had captured three of the four largest cities (Lubumbashi, Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi) and nearly half the country's territory, including virtually all the mining areas, from which Zaire derives the bulk of its foreign earnings.

Besides threatening the survival of Mr. Mobutu's regime, the rebel advances disrupted the ongoing efforts of international relief agencies to reach hundreds of thousands of Rwandese refugees, while also creating new populations of displaced Zairians.

Displaced/refugees to benefit from UN Great Lakes appeal

Zaire	460,000
Burundi	615,000
Tanzania	326,000
Uganda, Zambia	33,000
Total	**1,434,000**

Source: UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs

Prior to the ADFL's victory in Kisangani, humanitarian organizations had hoped to persuade the rebel forces to open up a safe corridor and let those of the 170,000 refugees near Kisangani who were strong enough walk back to Rwanda, stopping at way stations. The matter was complicated by the presence among the refugees of thousands of ex-government troops and Hutu militia members who had carried out the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Since the ADFL draws some of its support from local Zairian Tutsis and reputedly from Rwanda as well, it has been deeply suspicious of male refugees of a certain age, a stance that was only hardened when the Zairian government began arming the Hutu militiamen to fight against the rebels. The ADFL initially refused to allow organized refugee camps to be set up in areas under its control, or to permit refugees to approach or pass through Kisangani, ostensibly "for security reasons."

As a result, tens of thousands of refugees were almost constantly on the move in dense forest, beyond the reach of humanitarian assistance. As they became increasingly exhausted, many succumbed to hunger and disease.

With greater tension in Kinshasa itself, relief officials fear that the trickle of refugees across the river into Congo may swell into yet another flood. The threat of major conflict in the capital mounted as Mr. Mobutu declared a state of emergency on 8 April, while supporters of long-time opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi organized street protests and strikes to press for Mr. Mobutu's resignation.

Searching for a political solution

Already working hard to contain the regional repercussions of the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi, the UN and other international actors began searching for a political solution to the Zairian crisis. The UN and OAU named Mr. Sahnoun in January as their joint Special Representative for the Great Lakes region, while African governments also urged negotiations.

These efforts achieved a breakthrough at the OAU Central Organ summit meeting in Lomé in late March, at which both the Zairian government and the ADFL agreed for the first time to open the direct talks in South Africa.

UN Secretary-General Annan, who attended the Lomé summit, noted that both sides had agreed "on the principle" of a ceasefire and negotiations, based on a five-point peace plan that was earlier proposed by Mr. Sahnoun and adopted by the UN Security Council on 18 February. The plan called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of all external forces, including mercenaries, and reaffirmation of respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Zaire and other states in the Great Lakes region. It also urged protection and security for all refugees and displaced persons, as well as the rapid and peaceful settlement of the crisis in the region through dialogue, electoral processes and the convening of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region.

In anticipation of a political agreement among the Zairian protagonists, the UN has made contingency plans towards monitoring a ceasefire and implementation of a peace plan, Mr. Annan informed the Lomé summit. Senior UN officials later advised the Security Council that up to 200 liaison officers could be dispatched to Zaire within two weeks of an agreement, in advance of a full-scale mission of 1,500-1,600 troops and logistical support.

The bulk of such forces would likely come

Emergencies from Rwanda to Sierra Leone

Although cereal production across sub-Saharan Africa reached a record level of 90 mn tonnes in 1996 (14 mn tonnes more than the year before), drought, warfare, disease and food shortages have hit millions of people in 14 countries, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has reported. The FAO has urged donors and relief agencies to quickly deliver relief to eastern Zaire, and to continue emergency assistance to returning refugees and displaced persons in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone, among other countries.

Rwanda: The sudden return in late 1996 of hundreds of thousands of refugees from both Zaire and Tanzania has greatly increased the country's emergency needs. Since then, thousands more Rwandese refugees have continued to return home each week. The higher demand, combined with a 12 per cent decline in the production of beans, the staple food crop, has pushed up food prices by 30 per cent over last year's average. The FAO and the UN's World Food Programme estimate that 81,000 tonnes of cereals and 33,000 tonnes of pulses will be needed during the first half of 1997 to cover the needs of some 2.6 million people, or one-third of Rwanda's population. Clashes between the army and Hutu militiamen continue in parts of the country, hampering the work of relief organizations.

Burundi: Fighting between Hutu rebel forces and the army continues to take many lives and to displace hundreds of thousands of villagers. UNHCR reported on 26 March that while many Burundian refugees have returned home, 281,000 remain in Tanzania, 44,000 in Zaire and 9,000 in Rwanda. Both returnees and newly displaced villagers have been directed by the government to "regroupment" camps. UN officials have expressed concern about the regroupment policy, pointing to "dangerously unsanitary" conditions in the camps and evidence of high levels of malnutrition. To facilitate relief efforts, a regional summit on Burundi, held in Arusha, Tanzania, on 16 April, eased the trade sanctions imposed on Burundi following the July 1996 coup. It also urged the government of Burundi to disband its regroupment camps.

Tanzania: Besides hosting over 360,000 refugees from Burundi and Zaire, Tanzania is experiencing one of the worst ever droughts in its northern regions. By late March, WFP said some 3.9 million Tanzanians were affected by the drought, with 670,800 of them in need of emergency food aid over a four-month period. President Benjamin Mkapa announced on 10 April that Tanzania's grain stocks were

UNHCR/ R. LeMoyne

Going back home: some of the nearly 1 million refugees who returned to Rwanda in November.

from African countries, given the limited interest expressed by the larger industrial powers. "Should such a monitoring mechanism be established," the UN Secretary-General told the Lomé meeting, "African states and the OAU will have to play an important part in it."

In November 1996, several donor countries had planned to send troops to Zaire to assist the Rwandese refugees, and the US and Canada actually sent small advance logistical units. But plans for more extensive external military involvement were abandoned after the Zairian rebels attacked the refugee camps. This caused the Hutu political leaders, soldiers and militia to flee deeper into Zaire, enabling the return to Rwanda of more than a million of the refugees. Mr. Annan then proposed in February that the international community "study the possibility of using troops to create humanitarian corridors to evacuate the refugees" from eastern Zaire, but the Security Council did not to take up the suggestion.

Human rights concerns

Well aware of earlier atrocities against civilians in the Great Lakes region, relief personnel have from the outset sought to expose violations by Zairian government troops, Hutu militiamen and ADFL forces.

In March, the US-based Human Rights Watch, in letters to the UN, US government and European Union, cited reports of killings of unarmed civilians in eastern Zaire by members of the ADFL and by Hutu militiamen and soldiers. "The failure to investigate accusations of large-scale killings of civilians and to hold authorities responsible for such abuses will only perpetuate the impunity that has encouraged continuing violence in this region," the organization warned. That same month, the International Committee of the Red Cross expressed concern not only over the ADFL's hampering of access to Rwandese refugees, but also the "large numbers" of people arrested in Kisangani following its capture by the ADFL. Mr. Roberto Garreton, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Zaire, following a visit to eastern Zaire, has called for a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate reports of massacres by ADFL forces, as well as other human rights violations.

At the Lomé meeting, Secretary-General Annan also urged that atrocities be investigated. "We must keep human rights issues at the forefront of our consideration," he said. ■

totally depleted, and appealed to donors for $1.3 mn of food aid.

Uganda: Attacks by rebel forces in the northern provinces, combined with drought in northern and eastern Uganda and the presence of large numbers of Sudanese, Rwandese and Zairian refugees, have disrupted agriculture and increased food needs. The UN has appealed to donors for $5.4 mn to assist more than 180,000 Ugandans displaced in the north. Of the approximately 225,000 Sudanese refugees in Uganda, some 60,000 have returned home since early March, following advances by rebel forces in southern Sudan.

Sudan: On 18 February, the UN launched an inter-agency appeal for $120.8 mn to cover emergency needs in Sudan during 1997. This includes food aid for 2.6 million people and health, nutrition and water/sanitation assistance for a war-affected population of 4.2 million, more than three-fourths of them in the south. Over the past year, the Sudanese government has increased its restrictions on the flow of international relief assistance, and some organizations have suspended their operations in Sudan. In the two previous UN inter-agency appeals for Sudan, donors provided only about half the requested funds.

Angola: Despite delays in the formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, which includes leaders of the UNITA opposition movement (see page 7), the ceasefire has generally held over the past two years. To aid resettlement and other humanitarian activities, the UN is appealing to donors to provide $228.4 mn during 1997. This includes the food, health, education and other needs of some 1 million internally displaced people and more than 300,000 Angolan refugees, as well as the demobilization and reintegration of an estimated 100,000 former combatants and their 340,000 family members.

Liberia: After seven years of civil war, national elections are set for May. Some of the 770,000 refugees (and an equally large number of internally displaced people) are beginning to return to their homes. Since agricultural production in 1997 will still be far below pre-war levels and the country is unable to import more than 50,000 tonnes of food, the FAO says 116,000 tonnes of food aid will be needed during the year.

Sierra Leone: More than 500,000 of the country's 1.6 million displaced people have returned to their homes since the signing of a peace accord in November 1996 which formally ended five years of civil war. On 1 April the UN issued an appeal for $68.2 mn, for March 1997 through February 1998, to assist the affected populations and help consolidate the peace process. In addition, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have appealed for $16.4 mn and $1.9 mn, respectively, to fund their relief work in Sierra Leone in 1997.

Somalis build peace from grassroots up

UN appeals for donor support to Somali efforts as regional peace initiatives continue

By **Margaret A. Novicki**

Somalis are slowly rebuilding their nation by forming grassroots, district and regional bodies to provide basic social services and decision-making structures in the absence of a central government. This positive yet fragile trend – if provided with international support – offers the best hope of returning the country to normalcy after six years of civil war, according to Dr. Agostino Paganini, Somalia representative of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

With central political authority still in dispute and external assistance on the decline, Somali communities have begun taking control of their own economic and social affairs out of necessity. "They have to manage their schools, their health centres, their water points, and that builds up a nation," Dr. Paganini told *Africa Recovery* in January. As a consequence, "peace has a real chance," he said, noting that up to four-fifths of the country is "more peaceful than in crisis."

Economic activity is reviving: the port of Bosasso in the North-east province is "booming" and three regions there are working towards the formation of a single administration. In the Juba Valley bordering Kenya, a regional administration is also being created.

But other parts of the country could lapse back into crisis if they are not strengthened. "What is important for the UN and the external agencies," Dr. Paganini said, "is to make sure that these areas gain self-confidence" by providing support. Otherwise, the weakest in society – women, children and poor – will bear the brunt of rehabilitation's "enormous cost," given the scale of material destruction from the war.

For example, the Somali capital of Mogadishu has been reduced to "a heap of rubble," the UNICEF representative said, and the city and other areas, particularly in the south, remain plagued by revenge-motivated violence. But to many Somalis, such factional squabbles are "totally irrelevant" as reconstruction work gains pace. Somali communities are now becoming "empowered," he said, by taking local action instead of waiting for a central government to provide for them.

'Donor fatigue' on the rise

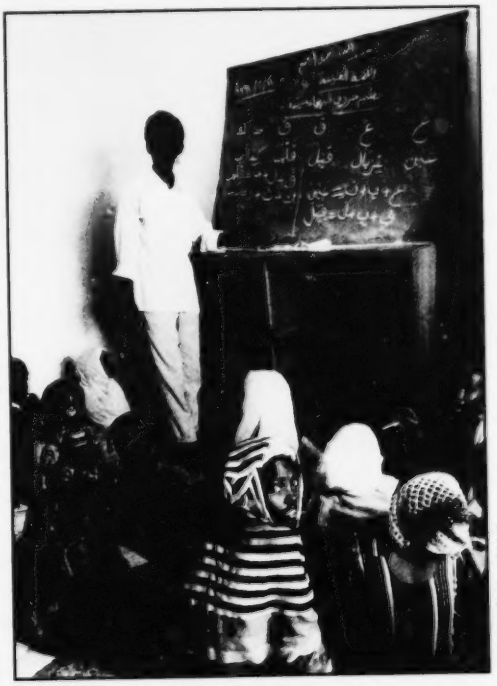
As a humanitarian emergency, a crisis of the conventional state emerging from its colonial past, and a casualty of the Cold War, Somalia presents an unusually complex set of issues for the international community, Dr. Paganini said. After the massive external interventions of the early 1990s, there are clear signs of "donor fatigue." The international response to UN appeals for support to Somalia has "diminished considerably" over the past few years to a point "well below what is needed," warned UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a 17 February 1997 report on the situation in Somalia. The 1995 emergency appeal received only 30.7 per cent of requested funding.

In the face of insufficient resources and the fragility of the current situation, the UN launched a new inter-agency appeal for Somalia in December 1996 for $100.5 mn to cover the period October 1996 to December 1997. The appeal targets four priority areas – emergency assistance, reintegration, rehabilitation and governance – recognizing that although there was no major humanitarian crisis in 1996, an increase in fighting could rapidly worsen conditions. Somalia also remains vulnerable to epidemics, drought and famine, and needs to be prepared for emergencies.

Reintegration and rehabilitation programmes are also needed for the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced and an estimated 430,000 Somali refugees in neighbouring countries – mainly Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti – many of whom are expected to return to Somalia this year due to the improved internal situation. Country-wide projects to jumpstart education and health services, as well as provision of food aid to areas in transition, are priorities.

At the root of Somalia's emergency, the UN appeal states, is a "crisis of governance." But in the current context, said Dr. Paganini, Somalis have taken governance into their own hands by creating councils for schools, parent-teacher associations, women's groups to manage hygiene, and water authorities. The appeal aims to strengthen these efforts, he said.

Regional efforts to bring about reconciliation among rival factions are important, the UNICEF representative noted. But to concentrate now on creating a central authority would be a mistake, especially after a recent history of "oppressive and exploitative" government, he said. In addition, many of the current faction leaders have no credibility, Dr. Paganini commented, because they have "too much blood on their hands."



Somali communities have begun taking control of their own economic and social affairs, including running their schools.

UNICEF / Rudy Press

In late February, the UN Security Council called on the factions to cease hostilities and cooperate with regional and other efforts toward peace and national reconciliation. In January, 27 Somali leaders signed an agreement in Sodere, Ethiopia, to form a National Salvation Council and National Executive Committee leading towards a transitional government. However, neither Mr. Hussein Aidid, who took over leadership of the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance faction after his father's death last year, nor Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, who heads the self-declared government of "Somaliland" in the north, participated in the meeting. ■

Annan's Africa trip

from page 1

succeed," he told journalists (see pages 18-21).

UN/ Milton Grant

Secretary-General Annan with Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos in Luanda.

South Africa the first stop

Beginning his African trip in South Africa – where he conferred with President Nelson Mandela and other government officials – the Secretary-General noted that the entire Southern African region will be conflict-free for the first time in many years once Angola is finally at peace.

"Just imagine the possibilities for economic cooperation, for joint projects, whether in the hydro-electric area...or for tourism, that no region would be able to compete with," he said during a live international radio broadcast on his return to New York.

Mr. Annan called attention to the significant contributions made by the UN to the victory over apartheid and the attainment of a democratic South Africa, in an address to the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg on 21 March. "The experience," he said, "helped define the role the world organization could play in resolving seemingly intractable confrontations."

The Secretary-General also commended South Africans for their efforts to promote national reconciliation in Angola – a demonstration of "the same determination" they displayed over the years of the struggle against apartheid. He called on South Africans to focus "those formidable energies" on the global challenges of peace, development and the realization of human rights for all.

During a brief stopover in Windhoek to meet with President Sam Nujoma, Mr. Annan praised Namibia's successes since independence in establishing democratic institutions, respect for human rights and the rule of law – "the basic requirement for a stable society."

Impetus to peace in Angola

Secretary-General Annan then continued on to Angola "to give fresh impetus to the search for peace," he told the Joint Commission in Luanda. The Joint Commission – which includes the Angolan government, UNITA, the UN and the observer countries of the US, the Russian Federation and Portugal – is charged with monitoring the implementation of the UN-brokered Lusaka Protocol of 1994, which, Mr. Annan stated, had "lagged lamentably behind." In Cuito in central Angola, he paid tribute to the thousands of Angolans who welcomed him there for the efforts they had made to reconstruct their lives and their city.

The Secretary-General also met with Mr. Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA leader, at his headquarters in Bailundo in central Angola, and obtained a pledge that final steps would be taken to implement the peace agreement with the government. The delayed arrival in Luanda of UNITA deputies and ministers had prevented the two sides from forming the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation and the unified National Assembly, as called for in the Lusaka agreement.

After talks with President José Eduardo dos Santos in Luanda, Mr. Annan addressed the first session of the Assembly on 25 March – a "moment of transcendental change" in the political life of Angola. "The goal of peace is at last in sight," he said, commending representatives of the 12 political parties, including UNITA, who took their seats at the opening, for demonstrating their commitment to democracy and national reconciliation.

The new government was inaugurated on 11 April, although Mr. Savimbi, who was given the official post of president of Angola's main opposition party, failed to attend the Luanda ceremonies, citing security concerns. The mandate of the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), which was to expire on 31 March, has been extended by the Security Council to 30 June.

Before addressing the Assembly, Mr. Annan launched a $228.4 mn humanitarian appeal for international assistance to address Angola's substantial relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs (see page 5). The appeal, the Secretary-General said, provides a "material framework" to ensure that the national dialogue which has begun on reconciliation, peacebuilding and reconstruction will take hold throughout the country.

The crisis in Zaire

From Angola, Mr. Annan traveled to his last stop, Lomé, for the OAU Central Organ summit, where he urged the warring parties in Zaire to come to the negotiating table within the framework of the five-point peace plan endorsed by the Security Council and the OAU.

"Zairians must now move forward on a clear path towards lasting peace and reconstruction based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights," the Secretary-General said. "But before that can happen, the fighting must stop and a dialogue must begin among Zairians."

In a communiqué signed at the end of the two-day meeting, representatives of the government of Zaire and Laurent Désiré Kabila's ADFL agreed on the principle of a ceasefire and negotiations. The first direct talks between the two sides began in South Africa a week and a half later with both parties agreeing on "the need for a ceasefire," although no cessation of hostilities has been announced.

In welcoming the talks, the Secretary-General noted that both the ADFL and the government of Zaire had reaffirmed their support for the UN/OAU peace plan and committed themselves to "transparent, fair and inclusive elections to bring about democratic change in Zaire."

"I hope that the political family of Zaire will now work together to build a peaceful future," Mr. Annan said. "If they do so, the world will applaud their courage and the entire region will benefit." ■

High-level panel views Africa's progress

Reforms have borne results, but need to be sustained and deepened

African countries registered improved economic performance in 1996 – with 5 per cent or more growth rates in many countries – while continuing to assume ownership of their development programmes, according to the Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development, which held its sixth meeting at UN headquarters on 13 March. Despite these positive trends, the Panel warned that poverty in Africa has increased and called for social programmes targeting vulnerable groups to be carried out concurrently with political and economic reforms.

In his first statement to the Panel, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stressed his commitment to use the full capacities of the UN system to promote African development, and urged the Panel to continue to provide a focus for the UN's work in this area.

While there is "not much good news" coming from Africa these days, the Secretary-General said the continent is a "sleeping giant" which will one day wake up. Peace, security, stability, human rights and good governance, as well as sound economic policies, are all essential elements of his vision of African development, Secretary-General Annan said.

The Panel of High-level Personalities was established in 1992 by then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to advise him in the implementation of the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) and to play an advocacy role on African development issues.

In its March meeting, the Panel, which was chaired by Baroness Lynda Chalker, the UK's Minister for Overseas Development, focused on three themes: the progress Africa made in implementing economic and political reforms in 1996; good governance as a key factor in development; and agriculture and food security in the aftermath of the recent World Food Summit.

Reviewing some of the major challenges confronting Africa, Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, noted that the encouraging economic performance of many countries – due mainly to consistent political and economic reforms and increased attention to agriculture – must be sustained for true progress to be achieved.

The Panel noted that African countries should aim for at least a sustained 7 per cent annual GDP growth target in order to make a meaningful impact on social development and poverty eradication. To sustain growth, the Panel recommended promoting public savings and increased private sector investment.

While urging African countries to continue to boost the agricultural sector, the Panel also stressed the need for diversification into other productive sectors – with financial and technical support from the international community and greater involvement of the private sector. Special measures for the least developed countries proposed by the World Trade Organization in December 1996, including improved market access and increased training opportunities, should be further pursued, the Panel agreed.

It also recommended further improvements in official development assistance (ODA) to Africa, focused on building capacities in health care, education, water and physical infrastructure. Expressing concern over the "future credibility" of the debt initiative for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) if it does not result in "meaningful" debt reduction for those countries being considered, the Panel urged the World Bank, IMF and bilateral donors to be more flexible in its implementation.

Participants at the 13 March meeting of the Panel of High-Level Personalities

- **Mr. Bahiti K. Temane,** *Botswana's Minister of Labour and Home Affairs (representing President Sir Ketumile Masire)*
- **Baroness Lynda Chalker,** *the UK's Minister for Overseas Development*
- **Dr. Mohammed Sadli,** *Adviser to the President of Indonesia for South-South and North-South Cooperation*
- **Dr. R. Barthelt,** *Director-General for Sub-Saharan Africa in Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development*
- **Mr. Vijay Makhan,** *Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (representing OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim)*
- **Ambassador Yasushi Kurokochi,** *Special Adviser of the Africa Society of Japan*
- **Mr. Hazem El-Beblawi,** *Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia*
- **Mr. Delphin Rwegasira,** *Senior Adviser to the President of the African Development Bank (representing ADB President Omar Kabbaj)*
- **Mr. Nitin Desai,** *Under-Secretary-General, UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD)*

Also in attendance were:

- **Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,** *UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa.*
- **Mr. Makha D. Sarr,** *Special Coordinator for Africa and LDCs, DPCSD*

Promoting good governance

Many of Africa's long-running conflicts have ended, and progress has been made in putting in place popularly elected governments and in accepting the need to protect human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law. But institutions which enforce these norms need to be strengthened, the Panel urged, and the concept of good governance should be expanded beyond the electoral process to include civic education, gender mainstreaming, the separation of powers, neutrality of the civil service and the accuracy and timeliness of central statistical information.

African countries should also continue to put in place mechanisms for equitable participation and representation – especially those that promote consensus and power-sharing – so as to avoid the escalation of violence triggered by poverty and ethnicity. Efforts to strengthen the civil service, prevent corruption and create incentives to retain skilled professionals should be stepped up.

In Africa, there is a need to increase food supplies and access to food by the majority of the people, the Panel stated. Food security is a national responsibility, and countries should place an emphasis on rural development and infrastructure, including food storage at national and regional levels, water resources and improved productivity.

The Panel agreed to devote its next meeting, tentatively scheduled for July, to the role of private and foreign direct investment in Africa; the implementation of the HIPC debt initiative; and development assistance for capacity building. It will also review progress on the implementation of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, as well as the issue of trade access in light of post-Lomé IV future arrangements. ■

Africa resists new trade conditionalities

Labour issues knocked off the World Trade Organization agenda, but others creep in

By **Tim Wall**

African and other developing countries defended their interests more assertively at the first ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) than they had been able to only three years ago, when the organization was formed. Having had little voice in the discussions that originally shaped the WTO, many of these countries are questioning or resisting efforts to extend the organization's scope beyond strictly trade issues, but with only partial success.

At the meeting in December in Singapore, the developing countries' Group of 77 (G-77) succeeded in its primary goal of blocking an initiative to link labour issues with trade agreements, at least for the foreseeable future. In opposing the US-led drive to make trade agreements contingent on higher labour standards, developing countries argued that such an arrangement could be used in a protectionist manner to deprive them of their low-wage advantage in the global market. Several countries, Egypt and Tanzania among them, adamantly opposed any mention of labour standards in the ministerial declaration.

In a compromise, WTO member states' support for core labour standards, such as the right to organize, was affirmed, but the use of trade measures to enforce such standards was definitively rejected. The International Labour Organization, rather than the WTO, was designated the competent body to set and monitor the standards. The US nevertheless expressed satisfaction that even the word "labour" showed up in the official pronouncements of a multilateral trade organization.

Concern over linkage

The industrialized countries made greater headway in introducing other non-trade issues, however. With a WTO working group continuing to discuss environmental questions and other working groups newly established at Singapore on corruption and international investment, developing countries are wondering how far the organization's reach will be extended. The wide range of social and economic issues being introduced to the WTO agenda, at a time when leading developed countries are pushing for a "streamlined" UN with a narrower mandate, is raising unsettling questions about perceived efforts to transfer substantive global decisionmaking away from the UN.

Despite opposition from several developing countries, of which a significant number were African, the Singapore meeting decided that a WTO working group will investigate international investment, possibly leading to a new worldwide arrangement which would bring down national barriers to direct investment in a manner similar to that by which the Uruguay Round liberalized trade (see *Africa Recovery*, December 1996, pages 22-23).

A G-77 effort to give least developed countries (LDCs) zero-tariff access to developed country markets was defeated. However, a separate WTO declaration on helping LDCs and a follow-up high-level meeting were endorsed.

Developing countries succeeded in retaining in the Singapore ministerial declaration a call for accelerating tariff reductions in the textile sector, to the benefit of their own export opportunities. But this victory also was defensive, merely salvaging language urging tariff-reduction measures already agreed to in the Uruguay Round, despite opposition from Canada and the US. Earlier expectations that the ministerial conference would devote significant attention to developing countries' problems in implementing the Uruguay Round trade agreements did not materialize.

Significantly, the most forthright agreement to emerge from Singapore – an International Technology Agreement (ITA) committing signatory countries to eliminate tariffs on telecommunications and information-processing products and services by the beginning of the year 2000 – was negotiated without any involvement of developing countries and outside the preparatory process for the ministerial meeting. Initial talks, in fact, involved only the "Quad countries": the US, Canada, Japan and the European Union (EU).

The G-77 countries' anxiety that a small number of countries could negotiate an agreement with such global implications was not eased when US trade representative Charlene Barshefsky remarked that the ITA established the principle that "major trade liberalization can occur through the WTO without governments having to call for a global round of trade negotiations."

The concern among developing countries over such initiatives was echoed in an opening-day speech by Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Stressing the need to "define the natural frontiers of the trade system in a globalized world economy," he warned that "pressures to use the WTO as an instrument to deal with non-trade objectives, in short as a powerful device for global governance," may have destabilizing consequences. ■

Assisting LDC trade opportunities

WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero brought to the Singapore ministerial meeting the suggestion that developed countries commit to reducing to zero tariffs on products from least developed countries (LDCs), while developing countries would voluntarily bring down tariffs on LDC imports as they see fit. It was a plan he originally had aired at the summit meeting last June of the Group of 7 leading industrialized countries.

While stating that they wanted to do something for the LDCs, several countries, including the US and Japan, nevertheless balked at Mr. Ruggiero's proposal. They cited domestic legal entanglements and the complications of establishing preferential tariff rates within the WTO, although concern about protecting their own domestic industries, such as textiles, from cheap foreign competition also played a part in their position.

In the end, the ministers adopted a separate declaration on LDCs, containing a list of voluntary measures that WTO members might take on their behalf. More concretely, the main ministerial declaration calls for a meeting between the WTO, UNCTAD, aid agencies and international financial institutions and LDC governments "as soon as possible in 1997" to develop an "integrated approach" to enhancing LDC trading opportunities.

The LDCs are hoping that the "integrated approach" cited in the Singapore text will place their need for market access, debt relief and additional technical and financial assistance on the agenda. Some of the developed countries, on the other hand, want to keep the talks within the arenas of trade and of better coordination of multilateral efforts – in effect precluding commitment of new or additional financial resources for the LDCs.

Debt relief delay for poorest countries

Uganda to get relief next year, major creditors insist on tougher conditions

By **Christina Katsouris**
Washington, DC

Uganda will get a reduction of $338 mn in the present value of its external debt in April 1998. It is the first beneficiary of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in Washington on 23 April. The plan aims to reduce foreign debts of eligible countries to "sustainable" levels. Present value of Uganda's total external debt is nearly $1.9 bn.

Describing the deal as "warmly welcome," Uganda's Minister of Planning and Economic Development Richard Kaijuka said the international community had recognized the country's achievements of the last decade and also the "need to ensure that debt payments do not constrain further progress," a World Bank press release reported.

Prior to this decision, Uganda had seemed on track for debt relief this year. It then became known in March that major creditors were suggesting April 1998 at the earliest, others November 1998, and others still 1999. The Ugandan government made clear its disappointment and reiterated its need for prompt relief. In an early March letter to a London newspaper, Uganda's Finance Minister, J.S. Mayanja Nkangi said third- or fourth-quarter 1997 dates were explicitly discussed at last October's World Bank/IMF meetings. Uganda was "increasingly frustrated" at the prospect of delay, he wrote.

Launched in October 1996, the HIPC plan aims to provide relief for eligible countries with strong IMF/Bank programmes and with foreign debt burdens deemed "unsustainable" even after getting debt-stock reduction from bilateral creditors, mainly in the Paris Club.

The first package to enlist all categories of creditors, it aims to reduce and restructure bilateral, commercial and previously untouchable multilateral debt to levels that enable HIPCs to pay debt service and also invest in socio-economic development. This "exit strategy" is to free countries from repeated and costly rescheduling. Once a country exits, it cannot ask for more debt relief.

A country must normally complete six years of successful IMF/World Bank adjustment to qualify. Towards the end of the first three-year period, Bank and IMF staff do a "debt sustainability analysis" (DSA), using 20-year projections of debt, debt service and income. This forms the basis, at the end of the third year, for the "decision point" when creditors agree on how much relief to grant at the end of the sixth year "completion point."

Under various pressures, the Fund and Bank

HIPC line-up for 1997

The IMF and World Bank Boards may hold informal talks on the cases of nine Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) in 1997. Eight of them are African.

	Total external debt ($ mn)	Net present value of debt * ($ mn)	Total debt service ($ mn)	Exports of goods and services ($ mn)	Debt service/ exports (%)	Net present value of debt/exports (%)†
Burkina Faso	1,267	646	48	366	13.2	176.5
Côte d'Ivoire	18,952	16,596	1,046	4,527	23.1	366.6
Ethiopia	5,221	3,435	155	1,140	13.6	301.3
Guinea-Bissau	894	582	16	48	33.7	1,212.5
Mali	3,066	1,805	80	656	12.2	275.2
Mozambique	5,781	4,429	173	485	35.7	913.2
São Tomé/Prin.	277	142	2	13	16.2	1,092.3
Uganda	3,564	1,868	137	642	21.3	291.0

*The sum of all future debt service obligations on existing debt, discounted at market interest rates.
† Debt is deemed "unsustainable" if this ratio is higher than 250%. All figures are for 1995.

Source: Africa Recovery, based on data in World Bank, Global Development Finance, 1997

Postponement for Uganda 'a bad sign for other HIPCs'

A "shocked and disappointed" Uganda has been given no official explanation for the unexpected delay in getting early debt relief under the HIPC Initiative, Deputy Finance Minister Basoga Nsadhu told *Africa Recovery* at the 31March-2 April ECA finance ministers' meeting in Addis Ababa. "We have done everything under the sun to meet all the requirements," he said. Even IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus told the London *Financial Times* that Uganda's completion point – when a country obtains enough debt relief to ensure "debt sustainability" and enable it to "exit" from the debt treadmill – would be around September 1997. But, Mr. Basoga Nsadhu said, the months of optimism suddenly turned negative just before the 10-12 March meetings on Uganda of the World Bank and IMF Boards. Leaks to the press signalled the Boards' intent to postpone the completion point into 1998 or 1999.

Ugandan Deputy Finance Minister Basoga Nsadhu

Before that, Mr. Basoga Nsadhu said, the Bank and Fund had been "very supportive" because of Uganda's "many important reforms, some initiated locally, others in consultation with them." Uganda has an "irrefutable" 10-year track record and has been touted as the "angel of economic reform in Africa," said Mr. Basoga Nsadhu, wondering if "we are being punished because we are overqualified."

All this is a bad sign for other African HIPCs, he warned: "If we are the darlings of the World Bank and we are being given this kind of treatment, how are we sure that our friends will get fair treatment, considering the unique problems that each country has?"

Led to anticipate a September 1997 completion point and thinking "we could convert some of the huge resources we are using to pay debt," Uganda had started some social and infrastructure programmes. These include universal primary education – enrolment rates are already rising – and upgrading or building regional referral hospitals and county health centres and refurbishing the central Mulago hospital. A road programme to open up the agricultural heartland is also under way, with some equipment already supplied to districts. But the rest of the money for equipment "will now be consumed" by debt service, he said.

The government has written formally to the Bank and the Fund arguing that any postponement in getting debt relief "would be catastrophic." It is also unhappy at not seeing the preliminary debt sustainability analysis document until after it had been presented to the Boards. Uganda has made some progress, but "the HIPC would give us a leap forward in our internal programming," he declared.

have modified this six-year schedule, enabling rare countries such as Uganda, to qualify for an early decision point, and a shorter gap between decision and completion.

While creditors have now agreed to an April 1997 decision point for Uganda, Bank officials earlier conceded there was a "tension" over the date for granting it actual debt relief. US Treasury officials privately argued that additional aid and later completion would enhance the success of Uganda's reforms. "Is it a more constructive way... to provide money more quickly, to get the deal done... or is it more effective to wait a little longer," reinforce the current programme and then reduce the debt, asked Mr. Jim Adams, a Bank country director for Uganda and Tanzania. Bank officials have avoided naming specific creditors, but some argue that early completion for Uganda could set a precedent that would raise unrealistic expectations for other HIPC candidates.

Key document on Uganda

The preliminary HIPC document recommending Uganda's eligibility was presented by Bank and IMF staff to their Boards for initial discussion on 10-12 March. It argues that Uganda is eligible for relief under most HIPC criteria: its $270 per capita gross national product in 1996 qualifies it on poverty grounds, as does its adjustment track record on policy grounds.

By mid-1996, Uganda's net present value (NPV) of debt – the sum of all future debt service obligations on current debt discounted at market interest rates to reflect concessionality – was $1.64 bn, or nearly 233 per cent of exports.

The document uses a baseline scenario with debt and debt service ratios based on projected growth of gross domestic product (GDP), exports, other income flows and outlays. Then a sensitivity analysis works out how changes in income or outlays may alter Uganda's debt ratios and payment capacity. The baseline scenario assumes that real GDP will grow by 7 per cent between June 1996 and June 1999, and by 5 per cent a year thereafter. The analysis projects that the NPV debt/exports ratio would rise to 254 per cent in fiscal 1996/97, fall to 208 per cent in 2005/06 and 153 per cent by 2015. The debt service ratio would steadily fall below 20 per cent in 1999/2000 to 13.5 per cent by 2005/06 and then stabilize near 11 per cent.

The document says that Uganda, which got 66.4 per cent of its export earnings in 1995 from coffee, is more vulnerable than all other HIPC countries bar Congo, in terms of export concentration and volatility of export revenue. For example, a 20 per cent fall in coffee prices below baseline projections could raise the NPV of debt to exports by 30-40 percentage points over the 1996/97 baseline to 282 per cent and keep it above 250 per cent until 2005/06. It would remain above 200 per cent until 2015/16.

Given this vulnerability, Uganda might have difficulty servicing its debts at the higher end of the HIPC guidelines' target range of 200-250 per cent for the NPV debt/exports ratio. The paper recommended 200-220 per cent as an appropriate "sustainability target" to reduce the risk of further debt problems.

A 200 per cent target implies debt relief of $385 mn at an April 1998 completion point – $311 mn from multilateral creditors and $74.7 mn from bilaterals. A target of 220 per cent would require $189.5 mn in multilateral relief and $62 mn from bilaterals. ■

Bank says Uganda is to 'pay a price' for debt relief

Uganda is "paying a certain price" for being the first in line for debt relief under the terms of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, World Bank Vice President for Africa Jean-Louis Sarbib has confirmed. But the price is a small one "for all the Initiative to move forward," he told *Africa Recovery* in a joint interview with fellow Vice President Callisto Madavo during the 31 March-2 April in Addis Ababa.

Uganda has been given a lot of credit for its years of successful adjustment, Mr. Sarbib said, and it was nearly at the "decision point" only a few months after the Initiative was approved – it normally take three years. The issue now "is by how much we are going to shorten the time between the decision point and the completion point," usually three years.

"We are not policemen. We are not in the business of going and forcing a country to do something that's against its interests," says Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib (right), interviewed at the African Finance Ministers conference with fellow World Bank Vice President for Africa Callisto Madavo (left).

If the completion date is September 1997 or April 1998, "the cost to Uganda in terms of [debt relief] would be minimal," said Mr. Madavo – Mr. Sarbib put it at some 5-6 per cent of a potential relief package – and a substantial cost difference would only occur if the completion date were in 1999. Uganda and its supporters want an earlier completion date, but some IMF and Bank Board members have "other concerns, looking beyond Uganda to the implications for the overall Initiative," Mr. Madavo explained.

Despite the HIPC case-by-case format, some Board members fear that "there are not too many Ugandas in terms of the length of performance," Mr. Sarbib added. If in the first HIPC deal there is no gap between decision and completion, "you risk creating a precedent which not all countries will understand."

He said Board members had expressed "no particular concerns" over Uganda, and "no doubt or scepticism" about performance in education, health and rural development, Mr. Madavo added. But some really want a "very tightly managed" deal that benefits only those HIPCs that are "truly performing." So while in Uganda's case, the track record is "very clear and very long," Mr. Madavo said other cases might not be so clear cut. The members "most hawkish on performance in the [Bank/IMF] Boards are the ones who have said we cannot possibly merge the decision point and the completion point," Mr. Sarbib said. Their message is that "if Uganda has to wait, then everybody else [knows] we are very serious about performance." In a sense, Uganda had to go first "because no one can question the legitimacy of their case. But because it is Uganda, the ones who wanted to make a point" about the seriousness of sustained performance criteria "have chosen to make a case with Uganda." Mr. Sarbib insisted that eligibility for HIPC is now a "very good incentive" for countries already in Bank/Fund programmes "not to let the clock go back to zero."

The Bank Vice Presidents remained optimistic and reassuring, despite the history of internal and external factors which have made it hard for many countries to stick with Bank/Fund programmes, and unlikely that many can now do so for six straight years. Mr. Sarbib said "when you have an exogenous shock, we take care of it, we take it into account." So if export revenue falls sharply due to terms of trade changes, "then the relief will be greater." And there should be no conception of winners and losers, argued Mr. Madavo, stressing that the Bank, the Fund and African countries are working together to achieve sustainable levels of debt in order to accelerate development.

ECA ministers meet

from page 1

and Fund lack the political will to implement their own plan. Oxfam calculates that a one-year delay will cost Uganda $193 mn, or six times its public health spending. British parliamentarians of all parties in the Treasury Select Committee have in turn criticized the IMF for prevaricating on debt relief. The committee said on 12 March that the HIPC initiative was in danger of losing impetus and "must not be allowed to founder."

Against this background, debt and adjustment issues took centre-stage in Addis Ababa, although financial sector reform, capacity-building and capital market development were the other conference themes. Uganda took every opportunity to make its case, while the Bank deployed Vice Presidents for Africa Callisto Madavo and Jean-Louis Sarbib, and the IMF fielded Mr. A. Basu, its Africa Region Deputy Director. They brought messages of optimism and faith in Africa's progress and stressed the need for sustained policy reforms.

But the conference tone was already set when Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Kassu Illala, in his opening speech, expressed doubts about the HIPC initiative's conditionality and eligibility criteria. On behalf of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Mr. Illala said that in almost all African countries, excessive debt is hampering efforts to attract resources required for basic development needs.

Deputy Prime Minister Kassu Illala of Ethiopia (left) arrives at the ECA ministers' conference with Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako (right).

Without flexible application, the initiative could end up "like the mountain that gave birth to a mouse," said ECA Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako. It "could look good on paper" but not benefit deserving African countries "genuinely burdened by debt," he added, noting the plan's "failure to consider the fiscal burden of debt as a central variable in the debt sustainability analysis." He also questioned the two three-year periods of successful adjustment that enable eligible HIPCs to qualify for final debt reduction, and whether adequate and timely financing has been

ECA analyzes concerns over HIPC package

There is "lingering dissatisfaction" with aspects of the HIPC initiative, reports an Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) paper prepared for the sixth Conference of African Finance Ministers.* Causes of dissatisfaction include the "conflict of interest and possible lack of objectivity" on the part of the World Bank and IMF, architects of the deal and themselves major creditors with privileged status. This issue makes some analysts feel that the HIPC package might have been better balanced if an independent commission had steered its design process, the paper says.

Could the Bank and Fund's potential conflict of interest, "driven by the possible objective of minimizing costs to themselves," have been a factor in limiting the number of countries potentially eligible for the HIPC deal? The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and African ministers are among critics who have described as "artificial" the distinctions made between countries facing the same reality of debts far in excess of servicing capacity. And in February, the European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD) said that several IMF executive directors had confirmed the fear of non-governmental organizations that a "minimalist approach was to be expected from the IMF, namely 'as little debt reduction, for as few countries, as late as possible.'"

Another concern is that tough performance criteria in the framework of adjustment programmes could result in "help for too few countries, too late." Citing past experience, the ECA says the single biggest risk to the initiative is countries failing to meet targets and conditionalities, a risk that grows with the length of the HIPC programme. It notes the widespread criticisms of failed Bank/Fund programmes for having set "unrealistic" targets. But many African governments have also said, after the fact, that they accepted the targets because they needed the money and had no choice. The ECA says "this way of looking at the issue should change." It urges African countries to negotiate assertively, pointing out that unrealistic targets may just have been poorly negotiated features of a programme which then become "a major source of non-compliance, slippage and even termination of programmes." African HIPCs must also "do their homework well in advance" for the critical debt sustainability analysis, the paper advises, in order to play a decisive role in an exercise which determines eligibility for actual HIPC debt relief.

Due to early criticism, the Bank and Fund have conceded that HIPC debt relief will be based on actual and not projected ratios of debt-to-exports and debt service-to-exports. But in another crucial area – the fiscal burden of debt – the HIPC package remains inadequate, some analysts say, pointing out that countries with debt-management problems are commonly unable to control fiscal deficits.

The Bank/Fund response is that "due attention" will be paid to fiscal constraints as a vulnerability factor, on a case-by-case basis. The ECA says this is "not good enough analytically" because it "denies the inherent interdependence of the four structural blocks of the macrosystem – the balance of payments account, monetary accounts, fiscal accounts and the national income and product account." Relegating the fiscal constraint to a position inferior to the foreign exchange constraint in the policy models "...is clearly a weak link in the tools developed for decisions."

The six-year, two-stage HIPC process also "imposes unnecessary hardship" on countries likely to carry most of their unsustainable debt through those years, the ECA paper argues. Among other issues, it probes the ambiguous provisions for financing the HIPC package, especially the workings of the World Bank's HIPC Trust Fund, the criteria and terms on which the IMF is to provide ESAF grants and loans, and the need for better treatment of post-cut-off date debt.

*An overview of Africa's debt in the context of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) initiative, *E/ECA/ESPD/CMF6/3; February 1997.*

ommitted, especially by bilateral donors.

Illustrating the ECA push for new methods f work, the conference format broke with the radition of long speeches and little discussion. nstead, there were lively sessions featuring preentations by small panels, sharp questions and comments from ministers, central bankers and senior officials, and detailed responses from panelists. This format, said Mr. Amoako, "exemplifies the new ECA, networking, showcasing African talent, facilitating substance, and helping Africa find new synergies."

Faced with an excruciating debt burden, Africa must urgently revisit its Common Position on debt and reactivate the African Contact Group on Debt.

— Salim A. Salim
Secretary-General,
Organization of African Unity

Key session on debt relief

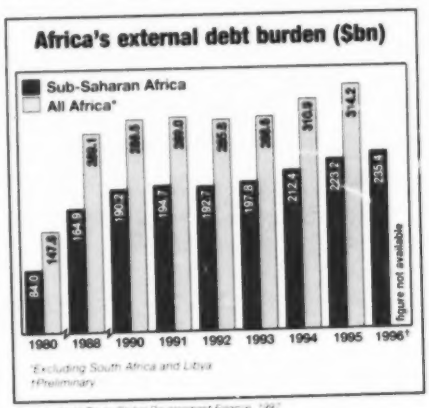
Uganda had wanted to bring a message of hope for a breakthrough to its fellow African countries "shackled by debt problems amidst widespread poverty," said Deputy Finance Minister Basoga Nsadhu, moderating the session on the HIPC initiative. But while the HIPC package is very welcome, some questions remain. These include the appropriateness of the eligibility criteria and whether the sustainability analyses give proper weight to vulnerability and other exogenous factors.

But for Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, the main issue was how to move forward, balancing divergent forces, to achieve a sustainable level of debt for the largest possible number of HIPCs. In a lucid presentation of the complex deal, he said the key achievement was that all creditors had agreed on a package for the totality of debt which provides an "exit strategy" from costly reschedulings and which also deals with the "moral hazard" of giving relief to potential backsliders by monitoring their performance over a number of years. The package would also preserve the Triple A rating of the multilateral financial institutions, said Mr. Sarbib, adding that in an era of dwindling resources, the HIPC deal would secure concessional funds that do not create new debt.

Only countries with per capita gross national product of $800 or less (known as "IDA-only" as they can borrow only from the World Bank's soft-loan arm, the International Development Association) with a track record of good adjustment are eligible for the deal. Only after "full use of existing mechanisms" could their debt be deemed unsustainable, and only then would HIPC relief kick in. There is no "predetermined list" of potential beneficiaries – the list published by the IMF last September "had caused problems" – and no country is in or out until its debt sustainability analysis has been endorsed by both Boards, Mr. Sarbib explained.

This vital debt sustainability analysis (DSA) is a tripartite exercise done by the Bank, the Fund and the country near the end of the first three-year period. Appropriate speed has to be balanced with "ownership": a country "must be fully behind the DSA," Mr. Sarbib insisted.

The DSA is the basis for the "decision point" at the end of the third year when creditors decide how much debt relief will be needed at the end of the sixth year, known as the "completion point." This second three-year period aims to ensure that the "budget space" provided by debt relief is applied to economic management and social development. A country starting a Bank/Fund programme in January 1997 would reach decision point in 1999, and completion point in 2002. If it already has a track record – hypothetically as far back as 1991 – then the decision point could be in 1997 and an earlier completion point is "even possible," Mr. Sarbib said.



IDA grants may be given between decision and completion points, like a "down payment" that would "help keep all our eyes on the prize." Each creditor is responsible for its share of debt relief, and the bilaterals have so far put $43 mn into the HIPC Trust Fund, Mr. Sarbib reported.

The African Development Bank's initial contribution to the HIPC package is through the soft-loan African Development Fund (ADF), said ADB Vice-President Ferhat Lounes. For the 1997-99 period, it is setting up a supplementary financing mechanism, similar to the World Bank's Fifth Dimension facility, to help deserving countries service debts contracted on harder terms from the ADB. Estimating HIPC debt to the ADB at $872 mn in net present value and $1.3 bn in nominal terms, Mr. Lounes said ADB relief will be disbursed in the 1997-2003 period. The resources will come from ADB net revenue and from writing off bad ADF loans. But the ADB/ADF Boards are considering various options to fill a financing gap.

IMF participation is through its enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF), but special IMF funding will only come at completion point, said Mr. Basu. Just this past February did the IMF Board lift the previous country limit of two consecutive ESAFs – usually three years each – and set up an innovative Trust for Special ESAF Operations which will make grants or interest-free, 10 to 20-year loans with a grace period of between five-and-a-half and 10 years. He said most ESAF operations for HIPCs would involve grants paid into escrow accounts to cover debt-service payments. The IMF Board also decided on early transfers from the ESAF Reserve Account to a Special Disbursement Account to get funds quickly to the first HIPC beneficiaries. But not all creditors have agreed to this.

How, when and how much?

Is there really enough money for a potentially growing number of HIPC beneficiaries, and besides the World Bank's initial promise of $500 mn for the HIPC Trust Fund, how much are the IMF and bilateral creditors providing asked Sudan's Central Bank Governor Abdulla Hasan Ahmed.

Tanzania's Planning (and acting Finance) Minister Daniel Yona said that six years of meeting tough performance criteria are just too long. The Bank and Fund's "traditional overcautiousness" explains why many of their programmes are not successful and why the HIPC initiative could fail, Mr. Yona said. Some governments have "behaved well for one or two years" but the critical external "helping hand" is just not there. The Paris Club has cancelled "at

most, one-eighth of our total debt" but Tanzania spends 40 per cent of its budget on debt service, 40 per cent on wages and salaries, leaving little for social services, Mr. Yona said, urging prompt help to maintain the pace of reform.

Quicker debt relief for HIPCs is essential, said Tanzania's Planning Minister Daniel Yona.

Why is there no reference to the level of internal debt in the basic HIPC hypotheses, asked Mr. Emmanuel Nana, Chief of Cabinet in the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), pointing to the influence of internal debt on savings and on investment. To spur growth, he noted, investment is meant to rise to some 25-30 per cent of gross domestic product. He feared that the tough criteria may prevent the poorest HIPCs from getting even the little sums of relief they need. This stands in stark contrast to the immediate response and huge sums mobilized in 1996 to bail out Mexico, even without a proper economic programme.

Speakers from Sierra Leone and Guinea both pointed to the problem of using the total value of exports in the analysis of debt sustainability. They said that the major exports of some countries go through joint ventures with foreign firms. These firms make foreign payments and also transfer profits. Only export revenue actually accruing to the government should be considered rather than the total value of exports, they argued.

Among other pertinent interventions, a Burkina Faso delegate reported some signs of withdrawal of bilateral support at the prospect of a country getting an HIPC deal. Uganda asked what categories of debt qualify and if there are cutoff dates. Another speaker asked if any of the first nine eligible HIPCs would benefit before the year 2000, adding that "as politicians, we have to advise our governments."

Wishing that the question of adequate money for all eligible HIPCs was the only problem, Mr. Sarbib said it would not be easy to raise more resources. On the analysis of export revenue in the DSA, he gave strong assurances that such questions as the public share of export revenue will be answered during the case-by-case examination of the composition of exports. In Burkina Faso's case, the inclusion of workers' remittances as export revenue had put the country's debt burden in the "sustainable" category. Weak data on the remittances led to their subsequent exclusion and radically changed Burkina's debt profile. "You must make your case forcefully and we will listen... But we must also listen to our Board members," Mr. Sarbib said.

Six years is an infinity for politicians, Mr. Sarbib agreed, but the HIPC package is "a real breakthrough," he said, recalling that "some of us were not allowed to utter the words 'multilateral debt relief' not so long ago."

The HIPC initiative covers public and publicly guaranteed debt, he explained, noting, for Sudan's benefit, that only private debt is discounted; there is no secondary market for publicly guaranteed debt and it retains its face value. To Guinea's concern over its debt to Russia, Mr. Sarbib mentioned the talks under way on Russia's contribution to debt relief at completion point. The impact of debt payments on the budget, a widespread African concern, is also being discussed, particularly in assessing country vulnerability.

Mr. Sarbib assured Uganda that Bank-Fund staff had made a strong case on its behalf, the Boards had listened, and had advanced the decision point, but the word on the completion point had not yet come down. Mr. Amoako observed that a one or two-year delay in reaching completion point could mean less relief for Uganda. Mr. Sarbib agreed this was true in that a more distant completion point means less debt to repay and less relief needed.

The exact usage of the Bank's HIPC Trust Fund is yet to be decided, Mr. Sarbib said, but the intention is to use IDA grants as quickly as possible. He stressed that any hesitancy on his part is due to an "excess, not a lack, of transparency." He just did not have all the answers

Forward movement at the Economic Commission for Africa

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) must set an example with new methods of work to accelerate African development, says Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako. It can also serve as a bridge to help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of development work in Africa by reducing duplication. There are so many meetings and initiatives on Africa that "the sum is sometimes less than the parts," Mr. Amoako told *Africa Recovery* in early April in Addis Ababa. Acting as a "clearing house for development information," the ECA can also enable African ministers to exchange and build on one another's experience.

Given the widely acknowledged defects of "donor-driven development," the ECA is very active in strengthening Africa's ability to manage its own priorities, says Mr. Amoako. Africa's planning ministers commissioned a report from ECA in 1995; the finished document – *Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities* – was approved by ministers in 1996; and by mid-1997, a follow-up report will explore key issues in critical sectors, the role of governments, foreign partners and the ECA, and point the way forward.

The ECA plans to link this effort to a World Bank-guided parallel exercise: African finance ministers enlisted the Bank in 1996 in a "Partnerships for Capacity-building" programme involving the ECA, UNDP, the African Development Bank, the Organization of African Unity and other agencies. The partners recently discussed the World Bank's programme in Paris and agreed that African institutions should play a key role in implementation. The two initiatives must be linked, Mr. Amoako explains, because "something like a trust fund" will be set up, with a high-level consultative council raising resources for African countries and the ECA to implement capacity-building programmes.

The ECA also wants to strengthen Africa's negotiating capacity in critical areas such as international trade. Africa hardly participated substantively in the Uruguay Round and in the Singapore ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization. The ECA is hosting a 4-8 May conference for planning ministers, precisely on trade and investment, and will help prepare African countries for the next WTO ministerial meeting in 1998, in consultation with UNCTAD and WTO in Geneva.

Turning to internal reforms, Mr. Amoako said the ECA has made "a lot of tangible progress" in the last two years. As planned, extensive consultations with staff, development partners and African experts led to the *Strategic Directions* document which refocuses the ECA's work programme on five strategic areas and was unanimously approved by African ministers in May 1996. Even if the reform process is perhaps three months behind schedule, "all the major changes are now in place," he said.

and "we are learning by doing." Mr. Basoga Nsadhu of Uganda heartily supported this Bank acknowledgement of room for improvement and that "we are all students."

Issues of multilateral finance

The working sessions began with presentations by the World Bank, ADB and IMF on the role of multilateral financial institutions in Africa's growth and development. Panelists for other sessions included Dr. Chris Stals, South African Reserve Bank governor, Mr. Nana of BCEAO, and Dr. Benno Ndulu, African Economic Research Consortium Executive Director, on financial sector reform; Mr. John Ross, Vice President of New York Bay Associates, and Dr. A. Maruping, governor of Lesotho's Central Bank, on building and using African capacity for debt management; and Dr. Lemma Senbet, University of Maryland, Mr. Arnold Ekpe, Chief Executive Officer of ECOBANK, and Mr. George Akamiokhor, Director-General of Nigeria's Securities and Exchange Commission, on capital market development and the role of information technology.

Africa is looking better, said Mr. Madavo, its output up from 0.9 per cent in 1994 to 5.6 per cent in 1996 and 31 countries now with positive per capita growth. These gains are fragile and reforms have to be deepened and accelerated, but there is no reason why Africa should not set ambitious growth targets of 8 or 9 per cent.

The Bank's first principle in Africa is to support the new-style political leadership and foster ownership of economic reform. The Bank, Mr. Madavo said, "can't enforce or buy reform in Africa" but must support Africa's own efforts to achieve progress in all areas, including regional integration and human resource development. "The Bank can't go it alone," he declared, stressing the importance of partnership and citing the Bank's major role in the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

The World Bank can neither enforce or buy reform in Africa nor go it alone. It must support Africa's own efforts to achieve progress.

— Callisto Madavo
Vice President for Africa
World Bank

Despite some problems, the Bank's International Development Association (IDA) maintains its critical role by disbursing each year some $2.5 bn of concessional loans to Africa, not to mention the $5 bn raised through the Special Programme of Assistance for Africa (SPA-4) for the next four years. But undisbursed IDA funds now stand at some $8.5 bn due to implementation problems in some of the 500-odd projects under way in Africa.

Among the comments from the audience, Zambia's Finance Minister Roland Penza urged the Bank to take a much keener interest in such problematic areas as public sector reform and retrenchments. Mr. Madavo agreed there are few examples of successful public sector reform, and agreed on the need to "look again" at policy in this area.

There is always routine support for regional integration, noted Mr. Boubacar Ba, Deputy Executive Secretary (Economic Affairs) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). But regional structures are inadequately financed and multilateral development banks are so oriented towards individual states that the latter need the banks' assent to contribute to some regional programmes. Will the multilateral banks get closer in concrete ways to regional structures in the short term?

The World Bank has not felt it possesses the right instruments, Mr. Madavo said. Using the example of the Maputo Corridor, he wondered if the Bank should make a loan to South Africa and a credit to Mozambique. The Bank is open to ideas, particularly from staff of the regional organizations, "so let's worry together" about how to proceed, he said.

On resource mobilization, Mr. Basu said unnecessary tax hikes prompt more tax evasion. It is better, he said, to improve collection, limit exemptions and shift resources from low priority areas "to those on which the multilaterals have been insisting, such as health and education." ■

Five divisions cover the strategic areas: Economic and Social Policy; Food Security and Sustainable Development; Regional Cooperation and Integration; Development Information Services; and Development Management. The African Centre for Women now has twice the staff to tackle gender issues more actively, while ECA budget, planning and human resource management have been strengthened.

Concerned to have "strong intellectual leadership and good management" of all divisions, Mr. Amoako said he guided a "very, very strong search process, both within and outside the UN." The result was a new management team set to be in place by mid-May. This "outstanding group of men and women" is mostly new to the UN, bringing new perspectives to the ECA. The gender balance is good, he noted, with up to four women directors out of nine or 10.

The ECA staff has largely been very supportive and a report prepared by staff themselves served "as a basis for most of the things we have been doing," Mr. Amoako said. Of course, some staff have been worried about their jobs, but this he understood in the context of the "entire process of UN reform and downsizing," he said.

The ECA is also decentralizing at the request of African countries. A quarter of the professional staff at Addis headquarters will be sent to revive the sometimes dormant Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCS). These offices, to be renamed Sub-regional Development Centres (SRDCs), will have 10-12 high-calibre professionals, bringing a critical field presence to the ECA activities.

Another aspect of field presence is the plan to review the quantity and quality of over 30 ECA-sponsored institutions around Africa. Most have solid mandates but weak finances. The World Bank is to help turn an initial three or four of them into "centres of excellence."

The response to changes in the ECA has been "quite overwhelming," says Mr. Amoako, noting a busy travel schedule responding to some of the numerous invitations to present the ECA's vision and to strengthen partnerships. Interested parties include the Carnegie Foundation, which he addressed in early April in New York, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada, which wants to collaborate on information technology at community level. This, he said, results from ECA work on the African Information Society Initiative. The ECA is also a co-sponsor (with the World Bank, Canada, and UNDP, among others) of a big meeting in Toronto in late June on knowledge management, with the ECA coordinating Africa's input. The ECA has also signed an agreement with the Indian government to support work on South-South cooperation and Mr. Amoako is visiting India in May to follow up.

The response from Africa's governments has been equally positive, and recent meetings with senior officials, including Presidents, in Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi confirmed the encouraging levels of support.

Africa is World Bank's 'top priority'

James Wolfensohn stresses investment, regional integration during second trip to continent

World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn (right) in Cape Town, South Africa: praise for budgetary discipline.

More private investment, greater international competitiveness and further steps toward regional economic integration were among the themes highlighted by World Bank President James Wolfensohn during a February trip to Africa. With stops of a few days each in Senegal, Ghana, South Africa and Mozambique, the 9-16 February tour was Mr. Wolfensohn's second to the continent in 18 months. "Africa is the World Bank's top priority and we want to strengthen our partnerships with the region," he said on the eve of his departure.

Noting that sub-Saharan Africa had recorded its second straight year of strong economic growth, Mr. Wolfensohn acknowledged nevertheless that the progress "remains fragile." Some 220 million Africans continue to live in absolute poverty, he pointed out, while the continent attracts only around 2 per cent of global investment flows.

'A good business address'

But at the same time, Mr. Wolfensohn added, "Africa is beginning to become a good business address." He reiterated that theme during his first stop in Senegal, stating that reforms in the Senegalese economy, especially in the wake of the 1994 devaluation of the CFA franc, had made the country potentially attractive to foreign investors. In order to actually draw them to the country, he added, Senegal needs to better "market" its advantages.

Senegal and other African countries, along with their international partners, also must take action to curb corruption, Mr. Wolfensohn stressed, stating that "corruption is one of the greatest inhibitors to investors." At a press conference in Dakar, the World Bank President said that fighting corruption was mainly up to governments, but that donors can help, suggesting that the Bank could draw up a "blacklist" of officials and businesses found to have engaged in corruption or bribery. "You need two to corrupt," he pointed out. "It is as much a moral issue for the corrupted as it is for those who corrupt."

Strengthening the private sector in African countries is likewise vital, Mr. Wolfensohn argued in a meeting with Senegalese entrepreneurs. He, along with the two Bank Vice Presidents for Africa, Mr. Callisto Madavo and Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, also attended the inauguration of a new Dakar office of the International Finance Corporation, the Bank's private sector lending arm.

'We want to be flexible'

In Senegal, Ghana, Mozambique and other African countries, however, the Bank has come under some criticism from national business sectors over its insistence on full trade liberalization. Just before Mr. Wolfensohn's arrival in Dakar, the Professional Union of Industrialists of Senegal (SPIDS) condemned the "brutal liberalization" which it said had hurt local industry by allowing an influx of cheap foreign imports. In Mozambique, cashew processing companies complained that lifting a surtax on raw cashew exports would make it impossible for them to compete with traders, forcing a shutdown of their factories.

Signalling a greater willingness to take such concerns into account, Mr. Wolfensohn announced during his visit to Mozambique that the Bank would no longer insist on a rigid timetable for ending the cashew surtax, stating that for Mozambique "the best thing would be to have a world-class processing industry." And addressing Ghana's Parliament, he affirmed, "We want to listen. We want to be flexible...."

Education and training are also essential for enhancing national competitiveness, Mr. Wolfensohn said in both Senegal and Ghana. In Ghana he addressed a seminar of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, highlighting the Bank's commitment to education as a central element in efforts to alleviate poverty.

However, the social impact of Bank-supported adjustment programmes continued to be a source of contention during Mr. Wolfensohn's trip. One of Senegal's teachers' unions issued a sharp declaration on the eve of his arrival charging that the Bank's anti-poverty focus is "hypocritical," while the main trade union federation accused it of promoting "anti-social" policies.

In South Africa, a coalition of trade unions, church groups, community organizations and development NGOs, called the Campaign Against Neo-Liberalism in South Africa, accused the World Bank of seeking to "marginalize our reconstruction and development programme in favour of free-market, cost-recovery policies." Although the Bank has not so far made any loans to the South African government (a $70 mn credit for small business development is currently under consideration), it has provided technical and policy advice. Mr. Wolfensohn, during his visit, praised the government's efforts to keep its budget deficit in check.

Throughout his trip, Mr. Wolfensohn also emphasized the importance of greater regional integration. In Senegal he urged exporters to look to the enlarged market of 60 million people within the francophone West African Economic and Monetary Union. In South Africa, he discussed the country's role as a source of trade and investments for other Southern African countries.

The Maputo Corridor project was a central focus of the World Bank President's visit to Mozambique. A joint initiative of South Africa and Mozambique, it aims to rehabilitate and expand the road and rail route between Gauteng in South Africa's industrial heartland and the port of Maputo in Mozambique, with sub-corridors to Zimbabwe and Swaziland. ■

Lomé Convention under tough scrutiny

European Union and recipient countries debate future of 22-year old trade and aid pact

By ***Shada Islam***
Brussels

The European Union (EU) has launched a first-ever public debate on the future of the Lomé Convention, a trade and aid treaty signed with 70 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. EU development officials are hoping that the unprecedented public discussion of EU-ACP relations will not only re-energize the 22-year-old Convention, but also give fresh impetus to Europe's development and aid policies in the new millennium.

"Development has to be put back on the front page," said Mr. João de Deus Pinheiro, the EU Commissioner responsible for development policy. Mr. Pinheiro's plan is to involve the 15 EU governments, the European Parliament and the 15 national assemblies, along with non-governmental organizations, academics and business leaders in a free-wheeling "public reflection" on the best way forward.

This time around, European countries may be even less generous to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

Modernizing the Convention

The key issue is how the Convention – initially negotiated in the 1970s by six EU nations and some 40 ACP states – can be modernized and updated. In a so-called "Green Paper" on Lomé that he drew up last year, Commissioner Pinheiro said he favoured the continuation of an "institution that we cherish," but that different options, including the Convention's replacement by regional or bilateral accords signed by the EU with ACP regions or individual countries, must be considered. The EU and the ACP states must have the "courage to question everything," Mr. Pinheiro wrote. "There must be no taboos."

Putting that principle into practice, the European Commission is organizing a series of seminars and conferences on EU-ACP relations in all 15 EU capitals to discuss the future of the pact. European delegations in ACP countries are also conducting discussions with local non-governmental organizations, academics and business leaders.

ACP governments, meanwhile, are conducting their own internal and regional debate on the future of the Convention. The plan is to organize a special ACP summit on the issue in Gabon in November. "Getting 70 governments to coordinate their position isn't as easy as it is for the 15 EU governments," said an African diplomat. "But we're determined to do our best."

The latest Lomé pact, signed in Mauritius in December 1995, will run until the end of 1999. But given the slow and complicated process of EU decision-making, the European Commission has already started preparing for negotiations. Mr. Pinheiro hopes to make proposals which will be discussed by EU governments for 10-12 months. A final, EU-wide negotiating position, which will be presented to the ACP group by Mr. Pinheiro, will only be ready in September or October 1998.

The backdrop for the EU debate is not as favourable as the Commission's development experts would like. EU discussions in 1995 on financial aid for the ACP states showed that most European governments – with the notable exception of France – are losing interest in the Convention.

Germany and the Netherlands, major contributors to previous agreements, barely maintained their share of the European Development Fund in the new agreement. The UK showed a clear preference for its bilateral aid programmes rather than the multilateral Convention. EU newcomers Sweden, Austria and Finland made it clear that they did not like a pact which focused essentially on the needs of former French and British colonies.

The 15 governments did finally agree to raise the Lomé fund by 20 per cent to $16.6 bn for the five-year period ending in 1999. But the increase barely keeps pace with inflation in ACP states, and the fear in Brussels is that EU governments may be even less generous this time around. Germany, for one, wants the EU's priority attention to include Eastern and Central European states. Also, with the introduction of the single European currency in 1999, EU governments are in no mood to increase their budgetary expenditure.

Through the public debates, EU development experts are looking for new ways to make development issues "relevant" again. "We have to talk about issues like negative interdependence," said an EU official, warning that failure to help developing countries will result in an increase in immigration, environmental problems and the growth of religious extremism. Others argue that the EU should emphasize "enlightened self-interest," since increased prosperity in the developing countries will expand markets for goods and services from Europe.

As regards the Convention itself, the key question is whether the treaty should be split up into smaller agreements linking the EU to separate regions within the ACP group. "It's obvious that the 70 countries in the ACP group have very different needs and priorities because they are at different levels of development," said an EU official. One option being studied is a separate agreement between the EU and the least-developed ACP states. Another is that while the Convention could survive as an "umbrella" treaty, it would have to be backed up by smaller region-to-region pacts.

Increasing the private sector's role

Next time around, the EU also wants to put the focus on increasing the private sector's role in ACP countries. While the current accord gives ACP governments a central role in development, Commissioner Pinheiro insists that the next treaty must look at investment promotion, help for ACP privatization plans and mobilization of private capital for infrastructure projects, especially in the telecommunications sector.

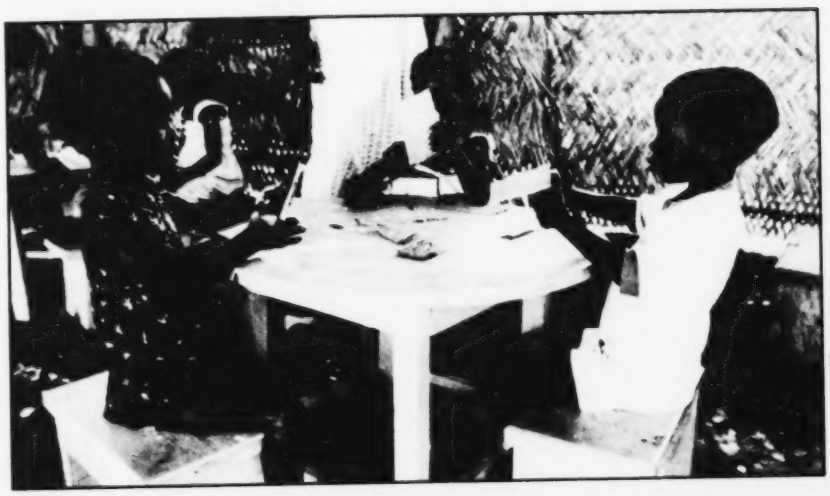
Trade issues will probably not take up much space in the new treaty. The Uruguay Round trade liberalization package of 1995 means that tariff reductions the EU once reserved for ACP states will now also be extended to other least-developed countries. In any case, the World Trade Organization is not likely to accept the Lomé trade preferences beyond the year 2000, when its current waiver for Lomé runs out.

But ways of making EU aid more effective will get top billing in the new pact, EU officials said. Mr. Pinheiro is stepping up coordination with the World Bank and the UN agencies, but also said that the 15 EU countries should try to make their bilateral aid programmes in Africa more compatible with the Convention. At a time when aid budgets worldwide are under pressure, EU officials said that efficiency and better coordination among donors must be a priority. ■

UN Special Initiative — one year later

Governments draw up investment programmes in health, education and water resources

By **Margaret A. Novicki**



The bulk of the Initiative's resources are devoted to expanding basic education and improving health care.

Several African countries are moving ahead with implementation of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa by preparing sector investment programmes in the priority areas of education, health, water, and also comprehensive governance programmes. This critical activity, taking place at country level, is among the Initiative's major achievements during its first year of operation, said members of the Initiative Steering Committee and the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to which it reports, who met in Geneva in early April.

Launched by the UN on 15 March 1996 to counter the decline in development support at a time when growth rates are rising in many African countries, the Special Initiative is a programme of concrete actions to accelerate African development over the next decade.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in New York on 14 March, "The Special Initiative must succeed. It will be a rather sad story if we cannot successfully implement a scheme which is designed to put in proper structure, proper emphasis and proper organization to help Africans help themselves. So I support the Initiative and I think we should all make it work."

The Initiative's top priorities are to expand basic education to reach universal enrolment by 2015 and to improve health care. It also focuses on promoting peace and better governance, improving water and food security, improving trade access for Africa's goods and services, helping poor countries obtain enough relief to bring their external debt to sustainable levels, and applying new information technology to African development (see box, page 20).

The Special Initiative's components reflect the development priorities that African leaders themselves have identified, most recently in the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) 1995 Cairo Agenda for Action. "In keeping with long-standing UN principles," stated Secretary-General Annan in a speech on 21 March to the South African Institute of International Affairs, "the Initiative promotes African self-sufficiency – and African ownership of the development process."

The Special Initiative has an additional

Ethiopia wins donor support for Initiative's priority sectors

Consistent with the objectives of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the government of Ethiopia has made advances in basic education and health among its highest development priorities. At a Consultative Group (CG) meeting held in Addis Ababa from 10-12 December – the first time an African country has hosted its CG meeting on its own soil – the government put its sector investment programmes (SIPs) for education and health on the table.

"Ethiopia told the donors: We want to raise enrolment rates from 25 to 50 per cent in five years and these are our plans. How will you support us?", said Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and Special Initiative Steering Committee co-chair. The Initiative, he pointed out, is designed precisely "to help governments achieve these goals."

Donor countries and institutions responded favorably, pledging a total of $2.5 bn over the next three years in project, technical assistance and programme support for food security and education and health sector improvements – more than was originally requested by Ethiopia for implementation of its medium-term reform programme.

Ethiopia's long internal conflict has led to a deterioration of the education sector and social indicators. Its health status is poor, due to the prevalence of potentially preventable infectious diseases, nutritional deficiencies, and a high rate of population growth. Its education profile is equally weak: only one in six children of primary school age is currently enrolled in school, less than one out of 10 is enrolled in secondary school, and one out of a hundred in tertiary education. Rural areas and girls have lower participation ratios. There is also a lack of adequate teaching materials and teacher training.

The CG meeting endorsed the government's Education Sector Development (ESD) Programme, a five-year strategy to expand educational opportunities towards the longer-term goal of universal primary education by 2015. The ESD will double current expenditure on education, about 73 per cent of which will go to primary education.

The government also gained approval for its 20-year Health Sector Development Programme, the first five-year phase of which will provide for the expansion of facilities and programmes to attain universal access to essential primary health care services within the next two decades. The emphasis of the programme will be on communicable diseases, common nutritional disorders and environmental health and hygiene. The UN system is collaborating with donors in building the necessary capacity for implementation.

objective of coordinating and harmonizing UN system support for African development. "It is one of the best ways the UN has devised to encourage the pooling of efforts by the UN and its agencies to have a greater impact on the ground and to better assist these countries," the Secretary-General told journalists.

Among the "substantial progress" made in the Initiative's first year has been a fostering of African ownership and commitment to its objectives, Mr. James Gustave Speth, Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), told the ACC meeting in Geneva. Mr. Speth is co-chair of the Initiative Steering Committee with Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

Such progress has been brought about by clearly focusing implementation at the country level, where the Initiative is helping governments "mobilize resources, rationalize resource use, strengthen capacity, and formulate policies in order to achieve critical goals" in the key development sectors, Mr. Amoako said in an interview with *Africa Recovery*.

The Geneva discussions followed a stock-taking technical meeting on the Initiative chaired by Mr. Amoako at the ECA in Addis Ababa on 5-6 March. There, participants focused on the status of UN agency activities in three of the main sectors – education, health and water. Each of the Initiative's components has one or more lead UN agencies responsible for oversight and mobilization of funding, as well as specific implementation arrangements.

The technical meeting also examined resource mobilization and country eligibility along with the cross-cutting themes of population and gender "mainstreaming." A country typology for implementation and benchmarks to measure the results achieved – or the "value added" of the Initiative, as Mr. Amoako termed it – were also agreed upon.

Progress in key sectors

According to Mr. Amoako, the Initiative has already succeeded in creating greater "synergy" and "unity of purpose" among UN agencies, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, "whether we are talking about education, health or gender issues in Africa." This is evident in the progress made toward implementation in the key sectors.

Education: The lead agencies in the education sector – the World Bank and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – have held consultations with African governments and donors and

Enhancing governance in Africa

Closely linked to improvements in the economic and social sectors, the quality of governance is increasingly recognized as a major factor influencing Africa's prospects for sustainable human development. The Special Initiative on Africa accordingly attaches a high priority to democratic institutions, peace, accountability and the ability of states to effectively implement policies and provide basic services. Support for African efforts to improve governance includes helping to strengthen the developmental role of civil society, an area in which the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is very active, building on culture and peace with UNESCO, and promoting sustainable capacity-building with the World Bank and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

Under a $10 mn trust fund agreement with the Norwegian government signed in 1996, UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa approved 12 governance projects. These include building leadership skills among women and youth in post-conflict countries; strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution; rehabilitation and restructuring of war-torn societies; assistance to governments to formulate governance programmes and projects; civil society empowerment; and providing a forum for African parliamentarians. While some of the projects are regional or subregional in scope, others are national, directed towards conflict resolution and peace-building in Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mali and Sierra Leone, and towards good governance in Cameroon and Swaziland.

Through the Special Programme of Assistance to Africa (SPA), chaired by the World Bank, training materials and packages are being developed by a Civil Service Reform Working Group, in order to help national civil services become more effective and responsive. This group is coordinated by UNDP.

In Africa, "the traditional roles of the state are being increasingly transformed in pursuit of greater transparency, with civil society and individuals playing more active and important roles in decision-making." This observation occurs in the "Regional Cooperation Framework for Africa, 1997-2001," a new approach to strategic cooperation with Africa approved by UNDP's Executive Board in March 1997.

The framework identifies better governance as one of the critical "entry points" for assistance and seeks to specify areas in which support for enhanced governance would converge with other development priorities, for example strengthening the capability of civil society to engage in policy dialogue, participatory approaches to community-based management of environmental resources and enhancement of women's leadership capabilities.

Similar governance priorities are reflected in the corresponding Country Cooperation Frameworks, the first five of which were approved at the same Executive Board meeting (for Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Namibia and Uganda). Other national programmes are also being developed.

Preparations are under way in both African and selected donor countries for the first of a series of African Governance Forums, to be organized by the ECA and UNDP in July. They will involve representatives of African governments, the Organization of African Unity, African Development Bank, donor countries, UN agencies working on governance issues through the Special Initiative, and a mix of African and non-African non-governmental organizations (NGOs). To help NGOs develop a common priority agenda on governance, a preparatory workshop is scheduled for May at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Organizers of the Forum note that while the principle of good governance is now universally accepted, no overall consensus has yet emerged on how best to build good governance practices throughout Africa. The African Governance Forum will aim to help build such a consensus.

UNICEF / Ruth Massey

The Initiative supports more effective expenditure in Africa's hard-pressed health sector.

a clear set of implementation arrangements is evolving. The Initiative has established a working relationship with the Association of Donors for African Education (ADAE), the steering committee of which is composed of seven African ministers, to provide the necessary African leadership for the sector. It was agreed that the sector investment programme (SIP, see page 21) is the preferred approach to resource mobilization for the education sector.

Health: African heads of state have been briefed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to secure their commitment to the Initiative's framework for health sector reform. Health ministers formally endorsed the Special Initiative and the reforms it involves during a September 1996 meeting organized by WHO.

The Addis Ababa meeting achieved agreement that rather than solely focusing on major diseases, the health component should take a broader approach, encouraging health sector reforms and supporting infrastructure improvements. Increased funding for disease-focused health activities is expected to result from health sector reforms, including decentralization, expenditure rationalization, and cost-recovery.

While the SIP approach is also relevant for the health sector, regional health programmes to combat cross-border diseases as well as inter-country activities should benefit from assistance under the Special Initiative.

Water: Shortly after the Initiative was launched in 1996, an informal Water Working Group, co-chaired by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, was formed to guide implementation of the programmes in this sector. It has held extensive consultations which have brought about cohesion among four water-related programmes

Africa enters the information highway

In early 1995, only four African countries were directly connected to the Internet; two years later, well over half are. Despite such rapid progress, "African countries are far, far behind countries in Asia and Latin America in using information and information technology for development," Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), told an October 1996 information technology coordinating meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Within the framework of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the ECA and the World Bank are the lead agencies for coordinating action to "harness information technology for development," in collaboration with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the UN Industrial Development Organization. At an estimated cost of $11.5 mn over a five-year period, this portion of the Special Initiative will seek to promote greater computer use and networking, expanded telecommunications infrastructure and the further development of other information technologies in Africa.

"Africa has no choice but to enter the information age if we want our countries to be competitive in the global economy," Mr. Amoako noted. Greater use of computers, for example, "offers solutions to distance education, extension of health and agricultural services, disaster early warning systems, trade and tourism promotion and other benefits." It is also an instrument of social advancement, since "information empowers and information frees people at all levels of society, regardless of their gender, their level of education or their status, to make rational decisions and to improve the quality of their lives."

A guiding framework for the ECA's work in this field is the African Information Society Initiative, first adopted in May 1996 by the ECA Conference of Ministers. It aims to promote awareness among policymakers of the importance of information technologies, connect more African countries to the Internet, democratize access to information and information technology, develop programmes to train African information experts and formulate strategies for resource mobilization. In October a Regional Coordination Committee was established, composed of representatives of relevant UN agencies, bilateral and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. Subsequently a small Technical Advisory Committee of six African information experts was set up.

At the recommendation of the Regional Coordination Committee, the ITU has started strengthening the regional telecommunications training centers in Nairobi and Dakar, offering advanced training in Internet operations. The ECA's Institute for Economic Planning and Development (IDEP) in Dakar has introduced information technology training to facilitate access to development information by planners and decision-makers.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), headquartered in Canada, in late 1996 approved funding for an information technology policy awareness campaign, to target senior government officials, international and regional organizations, science and technology research centres, development agencies, NGOs, key media organizations and private businesses.

The IDRC is also considering a project, known as the Acacia Initiative, to expand access to information technologies beyond

under the Initiative and have helped define common goals for the sector.

Efforts are now being made to draw up specific implementation arrangements at country level – Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique and Uganda have been identified as initial focus countries – while the need for funding for inter-country projects, such as shared water resources and river basins (a study on the Zambezi, for example), is also recognized.

Implementation strategy

After earlier debate on selection criteria for countries to benefit from the Initiative, the recent meetings concurred that all countries are entitled to participate in the Special Initiative – provided they are committed to the objectives set by the Initiative such as universal primary enrolment and better health service delivery. However, the scope and content of assistance will be determined by the level of development of the individual sectors in a given country.

Given untapped resources which have been identified, the Initiative focuses on managing existing resources more efficiently and preparing sound investment programmes. The SIP approach allows for a more comprehensive solution to sectoral constraints (infrastructure, recurrent costs, institutional capacity). It is increasingly used by the World Bank. In the context of the Initiative, the SIP approach will be reinforced through greater leadership by the recipient countries in the programme process and better coordination of external aid.

The success of the Special Initiative on Africa rests on achieving 'value added' at the country level, including more effective management of existing resources.

Countries which have already drawn up SIPs in the Initiative's priority areas will be encouraged to present them to UNDP-organized Round Tables or World Bank-organized Consultative Group (CG) meetings to raise the required funding. Ethiopia, for one, presented its education and health SIPs to a CG meeting in December 1996 (see page 18).

Countries with good SIP formulation and implementation capacity, but unresolved policy issues, will be helped to resolve them. Others, including countries emerging from conflict, which lack the institutional or human resources to formulate and implement SIPs, will receive assistance in building the necessary capacity.

As Mr. Speth pointed out at the Geneva ACC meeting, SIP preparation in education is moving ahead in Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Malawi, Mauritius and Senegal, and for health in Ghana, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia. Ethiopia, Mali and Mozambique have planned SIPs in water. Several countries – Cameroon, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Kenya, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Togo and Uganda – are preparing programmes for presentation at the ECA and UNDP-sponsored African Governance Forum in Addis Ababa on 10-11 July.

UN Resident Coordinators and UN country teams, including representatives of the Bank and Fund, are also planning and holding retreats to harmonize programming instruments and procedures so as to reduce the administrative burden on recipient countries, and to share information on best practices. The first retreat was held in Ethiopia in March, followed by Ghana and Mozambique in April, and plans are under way for meetings in Cape Verde, Congo and Zimbabwe later in the year.

At the Addis Ababa meeting, Mr. Amoako stressed that the success of the Initiative rests on achieving "value added" at the country level. He said the following mechanisms are a basis for demonstrating value added:

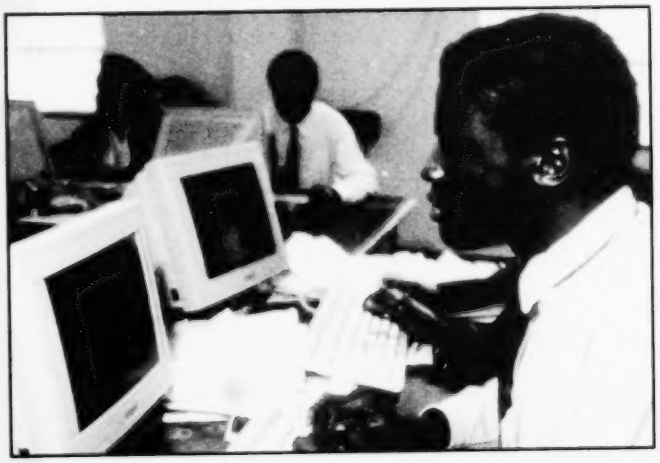
- continued use of retreats to harmonize country assistance, building on the country's own priorities;
- minimizing transaction costs for governments through harmonization of programming instruments and implementation arrangements;
- devising a standard reporting format;
- making special efforts to mobilize non-UN external partners and local stakeholders behind the Initiative;
- preparing joint country assessments based on the findings of UN partner agencies in a given country.

Demonstrating concrete results under the Initiative is essential, participants at the Addis Ababa meeting agreed. To this end, the Steering Committee has urged coordinating and cooperating agencies to develop and report implementation benchmarks for each of the Initiative's priorities against which progress can be monitored. A communications strategy is being finalized by the ECA to enhance system-wide coordination and inform the public on the progress of the Initiative. ■

the relatively wealthy urban areas, to rural and disadvantaged communities.

With a similar goal, the ITU and UNESCO have initiated "telecentre" pilot projects in Tanzania and Uganda, with significant support from Denmark. These seek to develop rural telecommunications networks and multipurpose community centres, in which local governments, the private sector and community organizations share information facilities to reduce costs and make support and training more widely accessible.

As Mr. Amoako stressed, greater use of information technology in Africa should not lead to "the creation of new elites, of new inequities built around information as a resource." Rather, he said, it should ensure equitable access. "All of Africa's people are stakeholders in the Information Society."



Harnessing information technology for development is a focus of the Special Initiative.

UNHCR confronts refugee challenge

Africa commands the agency's greatest attention, says Sadako Ogata

By **Carole J.L. Collins**
Geneva

Rwandese children greet UNHCR High Commissioner Sadako Ogata at a refugee camp in the South Kivu region of Zaire.

Created by the United Nations in 1951 to protect and assist refugees, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today aids one of every 220 people on the planet. But nowhere are the challenges more unprecedented or the demands on UNHCR's time, staff and resources greater than in Africa.

In 1996, Africa accounted for 9.1 million (or 35 per cent) of the 26.1 million refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) being assisted by UNHCR around the globe. In January 1995, UNHCR assisted 11.8 million people in Africa, up from just 7.45 million in January 1994, prior to the Rwandese crisis.

In an interview with *Africa Recovery* in Geneva, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata noted that Africa also commands the largest share of the organization's resources. "Budget-wise, about 45 per cent is Africa," said Mrs. Ogata, who took over as head of UNHCR in 1991.

The organization had 800 staff members in the Great Lakes region alone in December, about 18 per cent of the 4,515 field staff it deployed globally in 1996. "In the Great Lakes region I have been involved since the very first day, in April 1994 when [Rwanda's crisis] became acute," Mrs. Ogata said. Since the latest refugee crisis erupted in eastern Zaire in September 1996, Mrs. Ogata estimated she had spent about half her time working on it.

Causes of refugee crises

Although Africa's refugee crises are coloured by poverty, Mrs. Ogata noted that poverty alone does not create refugees. The causes are most often political, she argued, with military action provoked by political tension or a political power struggle usually the direct cause.

The dramatic increase in the number of refugees in recent years can be attributed directly to the growing number of intra-state conflicts, such as the one in Rwanda in 1994 which grew to engulf much of the Great Lakes region, according to Mrs. Ogata. As the Great Lakes crisis has shown, demobilizing armed groups that flee to neighbouring countries along with refugee populations is extremely difficult. These groups often use their bases in the neighbouring countries as springboards to attack the government forces and populations of their former homeland.

"And so we find ourselves in the midst of a regionally expanded civil war situation," said Mrs. Ogata, who noted that this has been the case in Yugoslavia, Tanzania and Zaire, as well as with the Liberian refugees in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

Asked how the international community might better respond to the security and humanitarian dilemmas posed by recent refugee crises, Mrs. Ogata said: "I think the international community has to make up its mind: are you going to deal with it or not? The kind of experience we've had on the Great Lakes region today makes me wonder whether the political decision has been taken to do something about it or not."

Central Africa dilemmas

Some observers have censured UNHCR for allegedly "tolerating" the presence of armed Rwandese refugees in its camps in Zaire and Tanzania between 1994 and 1996. Mrs. Ogata noted that UNHCR tried to control armed elements inside the camps but that plenty of armed elements remained outside them. "They held a strong grip over the refugees, and it got stronger and stronger as time went on."

Mrs. Ogata also pointed out the extreme difficulty of separating "the victims of civil war from the actors of civil war," both of whom end up as refugees in UNHCR camps. If the proposed Multi-national Force (MNF) for the Great Lakes Region was not going to separate them, she added, "how can civilians like our own colleagues be expected to do so?"

The High Commissioner, however, does think the task is achievable. "When people are at first fleeing a country, their fighting capacity is at a pretty low ebb, or they wouldn't flee," she noted. In 1994 the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations estimated it would cost about $60 mn to disarm and separate armed Rwandese refugees from civilian refugees. But "no one was willing to do it then," she said. In the end, UNHCR was only allowed to hire a Zairian military contingent to work under its supervision to provide greater camp security.

UNHCR was also criticized for cooperating with the Tanzanian military in the involuntary repatriation of Rwandese refugees in December 1996. UNHCR had planned a much more orderly return, according to Mrs. Ogata, and had also arranged to examine, screen and determine the status of those refugees who, for various reasons, felt that they could not return to Rwanda. Mrs. Ogata said extremist elements spread misinformation in the camps to lure the refugees away from the Rwanda-Tanzania border, which forced Tanzanian authorities to act.

Mrs. Ogata noted that a post-genocidal situation, like the one in the Great Lakes, poses unique problems for UNHCR and other organizations trying to repatriate refugees. Even those Rwandese refugees who did not participate directly in the genocide fear what Mrs. Ogata called the "revenge potential" if they return to Rwanda. Yet, the reconciliation process requires that some sort of justice be meted out to show that the perpetrators of genocide are being punished.

"But this has not been done in Rwanda yet ... because the justice system has taken such a long time to start functioning and, for various reasons, the Tribunal has also not functioned. This has certainly made the reconciliation process very difficult," Mrs. Ogata said. (The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was formally established by the UN Security Council in Arusha, Tanzania, to prosecute perpetrators of the Rwanda genocide.)

The High Commissioner believes the UN Security Council's refusal to deploy the proposed Canadian-led MNF to assist the estimated 300,000 Rwandese and Burundi refugees who fled westward to escape Zairian rebel forces was a grave error. If the MNF had been deployed inside Zaire, it would at least have contained the fighting, and it might have frozen the military situation, Mrs. Ogata said.

But, she added, it is still unclear whether the deployment of an MNF would have resulted in the refugees going home. Indeed, Mrs. Ogata noted that it was the fighting that finally spurred many refugees to return to Rwanda.

As for the United States proposal for an Africa Crisis Response Force, Mrs. Ogata said it would be important to first define the aim of such a force. "The most important role they can play, when people leave a country and are to be under international protection, is to disarm them," she commented. "Nobody right now has that mandate."

UNHCR's outreach

UNHCR is sometimes described as a kind of specialized "fire department," constantly responding to refugee crises as they flare up around the globe. Asked if the organization believes it ever wins, Mrs. Ogata said: "Oh yes, I've seen many successful repatriations, in Central America, in Indochina, in Africa – in Mozambique recently." But Mrs. Ogata still has put a high priority on improving the effectiveness of UNHCR's emergency response capabilities.

In recent years, UNHCR has more actively assisted IDPs. It has stopped the practice of just concentrating on refugees and now also helps those who have been displaced for a long time and are in refugee-like situations.

The causes of refugees' problems are political. They have to be dealt with politically. It's there that I'd like to see stronger UN commitment, initiative and linkage among agencies.

— Sadako Ogata

"We have not said we would be the lead agency for IDPs. But in the Yugoslavia context, it was everybody, refugees, IDPs, war-affected people that we helped," Mrs. Ogata said.

Mrs. Ogata would like to see quicker and better coordinated post-conflict rehabilitation aid following repatriation. She noted that although UNHCR can help people return home, "we can only do so much, because we are not a development agency." Governments often are not yet in a strong position to plan and to implement development assistance, and therefore more flexible and generous forms of aid are needed.

The international community needs to find better ways to empower women refugees, according to Mrs. Ogata. Because refugees often flee their home countries as an entire community or as a village, it often seems easier to distribute aid through the community or village leaders because they have some knowledge of and hold over their people. UNHCR has been trying to break away from this practice and to channel aid through women who are heads of their households. She said this is usually a sure way to ensure that the aid reaches those most in need, such as children.

In 1996, UNHCR worked with 453 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as implementing partners. But local NGOs in countries hosting large refugee populations often complain that they are largely untapped and even ignored by UNHCR (see *Africa Recovery*, May 1996).

"What we are trying to do is to link up and also to strengthen the capacity of local NGOs," Mrs. Ogata said. "Now this is the policy, but in practice, because the international NGOs have larger capacities, we often turn to them ... as local NGOs often do not have overall management capability. Supervising a whole administrative agreement can be very complicated."

In the past two years, UNHCR has initiated a special Partnership in Action programme to strengthen the relationships between UNHCR and NGOs. But much more effort will have to come from UNHCR, Mrs. Ogata added. NGOs sometimes become impatient with all the technical financial requirements of UNHCR, she pointed out. The challenge is to make administrative arrangements as simple as possible without sacrificing financial accountability.

Mrs. Ogata believes the efforts to strengthen the organization's emergency response capability have borne fruit.

"Now we have emergency teams that we can send all over the world very quickly," Mrs. Ogata said. "But what I would really like to see get better is for the political part of the UN to come in and solve the political problems that generate refugees. If not by the UN, then by the OAU [Organization of African Unity]. Because the causes of refugees' problems are political. They have to be dealt with politically. It's there that I'd like to see stronger UN commitment, initiative and linkage among agencies." ■

Major Asylum Countries

Country of Asylum	Total number of refugees	Number and country of origin
Zaire	774,500	370,000 Rwanda 76,000 Burundi 200,000 Angola 110,000 Sudan 18,500 Uganda
Guinea	600,000	400,000 Liberia 200,000 Sierra Leone
Tanzania	256,400	5,000 Rwanda 31,400 Zaire 220,000 Burundi
Sudan	405,400	349,000 Eritrea 52,000 Ethiopia 4,400 Chad
Ethiopia	394,600	290,000 Somalia 78,000 Sudan 18,000 Djibouti 8,600 Kenya
Côte d'Ivoire	372,500	327,500 Liberia
Uganda	263,000	225,000 Sudan 28,000 Zaire 10,000 Rwanda
Kenya	167,500	132,700 Somalia 28,700 Sudan 5,600 Ethiopia 500 Uganda

Source: UNHCR — Estimates as of February 1997

Uneven progress for African women

Since Beijing summit, nine African countries have action plans

By **Ann Marie Erb-Leoncavallo**

In September 1995, thousands of people from around the world gathered in Beijing to promote women's empowerment and equality. By the time the Fourth World Conference on Women had ended, 189 nations had agreed to take action to improve the status of women – from education and health care, to political participation, access to credit, and sexual and marital rights. It was the largest mobilization of the global women's movement to date and its impact continues to ripple throughout the world.

A year and a half later, from 10-21 March, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held its 41st session to monitor implementation of four of 12 critical areas in the Beijing Platform for Action: women in power and decision-making, women and the economy, women and education and training, and women and the environment.

These areas are key to African women's ongoing efforts to achieve equality, and some victories have already been registered. Women in Namibia now have legislation guaranteeing equal rights with men in marriage. Tanzania has ordered a review of its inheritance and marriage acts. The practice of female genital mutilation has been banned in Egyptian government health facilities. Uganda has hosted a conference on the empowerment of women and the girl child. The Southern African Development Community is establishing a tribunal to address violations of women's rights. And school curricula are being changed in Botswana to remove sex stereotypes.

But while there has been some progress, there is also cause for concern. When they approved the Beijing Platform for Action, delegations agreed to complete national action plans for women's advancement by the end of 1996. However, according to a new report by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), so far only 65 nations – including just nine from Africa – have actually drawn up their plans.

The report, *Promise Kept, Promise Broken?*, which is based on 102 responses to a survey by governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), complains about the silence of "several countries in Africa and parts of the Caribbean and the Middle East, where the number and needs of women and girls living in poverty or under repressive regimes are the greatest."

Indeed, more than half of African countries did not respond to the survey. Of the 21 countries that did, progress was noted in just eight: Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

According to the WEDO report, although Mali has completed a national action plan, the process of improving women's status is at a standstill. "The grand hopes aroused among Malian women by the Fourth World Conference on Women have not been made good by the

UN Commission on the Status of Women hears African women's concerns

A group of dynamic African women representing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the continent has called for the establishment of affirmative action programmes for women in government and the private sector, the promotion of capacity-building of women in the informal sector, and the strengthening of credit schemes for their benefit. These demands, among others, were presented by the African NGO Caucus at the 41st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which convened at UN headquarters from 10-21 March.

Chaired by Ms. Fatoumata Siré Diakite, President of the Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes Maliennes, the Caucus issued position papers on women and decision-making and women in the economy – two of the four planks of the Beijing Platform for Action considered by the CSW.

Many of the women in the Caucus had participated in the 1995 Beijing Conference, which, said Ms. Diakite, "was not just another UN conference, but a very important step in our activism as African feminists." The CSW meeting offered a useful occasion to assess progress since Beijing, to determine ways of continuing to cooperate with the UN on women's issues, and to network with colleagues from other countries.

"Women all over the world, if we have something in common, it is discrimination, violence, violation of our rights. So we came to the UN to exchange expertise and competence in sisterhood to strengthen the bridge we built in Beijing between North and South," said Ms. Diakite.

The UN also has an important watchdog role to ensure that governments follow up with the commitments they made in Beijing, said Ms. Jane-Elizabeth Ogwapit, national chairperson of the Kenya Business and Professional Women's Club. Her country had made some progress: a national plan of action to implement the Beijing Platform has been drafted and a task force has been formed to examine how laws negatively affect women.

But the government must show greater determination by making the funds to implement the Platform available, she said, adding that it took 30 years for the first woman minister to be appointed in Kenya – just before the Beijing conference in 1995.

How to foster the political empowerment of Africa's women is a critical issue. Ms. Jeanne Martin Cissé, coordinator of the Guinea branch of the Union des Anciennes Normaliennes de Rufisque, an NGO which focuses on education for girls in difficult circumstances, said that in her country, progress had also been made on a national plan of action and on appointments of women to high-level positions. But African women in general are handicapped by not having the same opportunities as men for higher education, she said.

Quotas are therefore needed to bring more women into the political process, argued Ms. Diakite. Low educational attainment should not be a barrier. "There are men elected to parliament who can't read or write, so why can't women be elected?" she asked.

African women should also be more involved in the process of conflict prevention and resolution, a point Caucus members stressed in a meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Caucus presented the Secretary-General with a declaration calling for more appointments of African women to positions in the UN system, as well as greater opportunities for their participation in the discussions and decisions of the organization.

"The Secretary-General encouraged us and inspired us to do more," said Ms. Ogwapit. "He told us he strongly believes the future of Africa depends on its women," Ms. Diakite added.

— Margaret A. Novicki

official national plan of action," noted the Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes Maliennes.

The Women's National Coalition of South Africa claims that the country is "going absolutely nowhere with the national action plan." The Office on the Status of Women has been downgraded, according to the coalition. "We have political approval of everything on paper but the Government has been slow to move and has even reneged on some of its earlier commitments," the group said.

By formulating national action plans, governments are expected to demonstrate their seriousness in advancing the Beijing agenda by identifying priority concerns, setting benchmarks and time-lines, establishing institutional mechanisms, allocating resources and setting up participatory processes with women's groups and other NGOs.

However, the WEDO report notes that action plans in themselves are not necessarily a sign of progress because many governments have unveiled plans that are "little more than lofty declarations of intent without mechanisms or resources to match," while a small number of countries which lack formal plans "have instituted policies and programmes that take women's concerns into account and have gender equality at their core."

Another cause for concern is the lack of funding to implement the Beijing Platform. Ms. Mamounate Cissé of Burkina Faso, President of the Women's Committee of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, said the Platform's goals can only be achieved with "extreme difficulty" given the economic crisis facing many African countries. "We need resources," she said at a recent meeting in New York. "Poverty has become feminized." Current statistics show that about 70 per cent of the world's poor are women.

Some African countries have advanced the status of women since the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Ms. Cissé called on richer countries for support and for more women to be appointed or elected to key positions. "The Platform for Action can only be a reality if women are involved at every level of the decision-making pyramid," she said.

According to the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), sub-Saharan Africa ranks second-to-last regionally, above the Arab states, in the percentage of women in parliament. In a report, "Men and Women in Politics: Democracy Still in the Making," released in February, the IPU says that women hold 10.4 per cent of seats in parliaments in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 11.7 per cent worldwide.

However, the organization claims that once African women do become candidates for office, they have a better chance than men of being elected, while the reverse is true in other parts of the world. The three African countries with the highest percentage of women in parliament are Mozambique (25.2 per cent), South Africa (25 per cent), and Eritrea (21 per cent), ranking 12, 13 and 16 worldwide.

Ms. Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Beijing Women's Conference, believes a key issue is empowerment – giving women and girls more power to participate in society through the acquisition of skills, knowledge, independence and resources. Africa continues to have the lowest enrolment and literacy rates in the world, according to UNESCO, with less than half of African girls enrolled in primary school.

While acknowledging that "a revolution has begun – a big revolution" for women's advancement, Ms. Mongella says it is important to work with dedicated men to achieve the Conference goals. Speaking at a meeting at UN headquarters, she stressed the importance of building partnerships. Because women have faced ridicule in some countries when they have demanded action, Ms. Mongella says they must move forward cautiously in order to avoid a backlash. "I am not saying that women should not be energetic or forceful, but that we need to strategize and change our methods, if need be, to stay on course."

There is no doubt that implementing the Beijing Platform requires more than national action plans and legislation. It requires changes in cultures, traditions and ways of thinking. Many men still view the struggle for women's rights as a threat. As Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund, told the CSW in March, "We must convince our colleagues in government, our husbands and our sons that they have nothing to lose and everything to gain from gender equality." ■

A survey of national action plans to implement the Beijing Platform

Country	Promise kept?	Progress made?*
Algeria	yes	
Benin	no	➪
Botswana	draft	
Burkina Faso	draft	
Cameroon	no	↗
Côte d'Ivoire	no	
Gambia	yes	➪
Ghana	yes	➪
Kenya	yes	➪
Libya	draft	
Mali	yes	↗
Mauritania	draft	➪
Morocco	yes	
Namibia	no	
Niger	draft	
South Africa	no	↗
Tanzania	yes	➪
Tunisia	draft	
Uganda	yes	➪
Zambia	yes	➪
Zimbabwe	no	↗

*According to NGO assessment, where provided
➪ = moving forward ↗ = standing still

Source: Women's Environment and Development Organization, 1997

Africa advances its micro-credit agenda

Advocates urge greater regional focus in wake of summit

By **Ernest Harsch**

Ensuring that Africa's poor gain greater access to credit can be an especially effective weapon for combatting poverty, participants agreed during a 6 February "African Advocacy Forum" at UN headquarters. Sponsored by several UN institutions and involving micro-credit practitioners from different regions of Africa, the meeting was designed to build on the momentum generated by the "Micro-credit Summit" held in Washington just a few days earlier (see box) and to spotlight Africa's specific experiences, concerns and needs.

Micro-credit is not a panacea or a magic wand. But it can be a major instrument of poverty alleviation.

— Machivenyika Mapuranga Zimbabwe's Ambassador to the UN

The fact that Africa is the only world region in which poverty is expected to increase, noted a declaration by 43 African micro-finance organizations, presents "a strong rationale for donors, governments and practitioners to give special attention to Africa's poorest families in the follow-up to the summit goals." Moreover, they said, African micro-credit organizations, few of which were even aware of the preparatory process for the Washington summit, need to be better informed and more closely involved in future undertakings.

Africa's own experiences

Numerous participants noted that Africa has had a long history of micro-credit institutions, some of them quite successful at the local level. They therefore regretted that the Washington summit had concentrated mainly on micro-credit "success stories" from Asia and Latin America. "Africa had not been focused on at all," observed Ms. Felicia Quartey-Acquaye of Women's World Banking in Ghana.

Indigenous forms of micro-credit, known variously as *esusu* or *tontines*, have existed in Africa since pre-colonial times, Ms Quartey-Acquaye observed, drawing applause. Chief Bisi Ogunleye, founder of the Country Women Association of Nigeria, urged support for research and documentation of indigenous credit institutions. "It is time for the world to know what we have and can share with others," she said.

Chief Bisi also noted that the further development of micro-credit schemes is especially important for rural women, to strengthen their productive capacities and thus contribute to food security. Since the majority of food producers in Africa are women, as are the majority of micro-credit clients, said Chief Bisi, "we must see micro-credit, food security and poverty eradication in Africa as three-in-one."

Another important role for micro-credit organizations, observed several speakers, is to link local communities with more formal banking institutions. "Micro-credit practitioners need to build up their capacities to serve as intermediaries. They need to build networks," said Ms. Victoria Masenya of the Women's Finance House in Botswana. Mr. Makha Sarr, the UN Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, stressed that "micro-finance is an integral part of financial intermediation, which is one of the priorities for Africa."

'One of several elements'

Many speakers explicitly linked micro-credit to other development activities, such as job creation, small business promotion and youth advancement; they cautioned that micro-credit should not be fostered in isolation.

Micro-credit is "only one of several elements" in the development process, noted Mr. Wilbert Tengey of the African Centre for Human Development in Ghana. The poor also need better health and educational services, for if they must spend all their meagre earnings on such necessities, "there will be little left to reinvest." Ms. Quartey-Acquaye stressed the need for governments and donors to review the impact of economic policies on poor rural women. "Micro-credit has to survive within a broader macro-economic environment," she said.

Summarizing the sense of the meeting, Ambassador Machivenyika Mapuranga of Zimbabwe said, "Micro-credit is not a panacea or a magic wand. But it can be a major instrument of poverty alleviation." ■

Summit calls for a global 'movement'

The 2-4 February Micro-credit Summit in Washington drew some 2,000 delegates from more than 100 countries, including several presidents, heads of UN agencies and long-time proponents of micro-credit such as Mr. Mohammed Yunus, Managing Director of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton, the US First Lady, who served as the summit's honourary co-chair, pointed to micro-credit as a "macro-idea."

Bringing together micro-credit practitioners, donor representatives and banking executives, the summit was the first major international initiative designed specifically to highlight the role and potential of micro-credit for promoting grassroots development and expanding the employment and income-generating capacities of the poor.

The summit adopted a declaration calling for a "global movement" to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families with credit for self-employment by 2005, with a particular emphasis on women. The costs of such an endeavour were estimated at $21.6 bn, of which $7 bn would need to come from donor agencies and international financial institutions, but the bulk from local savings, bank bonds, the governments of developing countries and the private sector. At the conference, UN Development Programme Administrator James Gustave Speth announced the launching of "MicroStart," a $41 mn programme of capital grants and technical support for micro-finance organizations, initially in some 25 developing countries.

Some summit participants warned against treating micro-credit as the sole or main answer to poverty. Noting that even a small loan can constitute "a burden for the poor borrower," Mr. Fawzi al-Sultan, President of the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development, stressed that micro-credit "is not enough by itself to ensure sustainable development for the rural poor." President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda catalogued a range of causes of poverty in Africa, including low commodity prices, land fragmentation, lack of roads and domestic market infrastructure, insufficient vocational training and protectionism by the industrialized powers. "Only when you have taken care of all this can you start talking about credit," he told the summit.

Drylands funding still unresolved

Developing countries say new resources needed to ensure Convention's implementation

By **Ahunna Eziakonwa**

Developing and industrialized countries are haggling over the best way to fund projects called for under the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), the international treaty aimed at reversing the land degradation that threatens an estimated 900 million people living in dryland areas in Africa and other parts of the world.

By the start of the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD-10) on 6 January at UN headquarters in New York, 60 countries (28 African, 21 other developing world, 11 industrialized) had ratified the Convention. Delegates to INCD-10 made progress on many issues, including the transfer of anti-desertification technologies and information. But they could not agree on whether a "Global Mechanism" (GM) – set up under the Convention to identify and coordinate funding sources – should itself be provided with the resources needed to fund the implementation of anti-desertification programmes.

Delegates from some donor countries said they had convinced their governments to ratify the Convention on the basis that the GM would not be an institution for financing the implementation of programmes and projects, but one that could play a "catalytic role" in mobilizing and channelling existing resources – a position that was widely challenged during INCD-10.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Tanzania's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Daudi N. Mwakawago, said the test of the partnership established in the Convention lay in "the mobilization of sufficient financial resources, provision of new and additional funding and the transfer of ecologically sound technologies." The European Union argued that although the Convention did call for a new mechanism to carry out projects and programmes, it had only "enabled the setting up of a mechanism that promotes a more effective way of spending and mobilizing existing funds."

Benin's representative and coordinator of the Africa Group, Mr. Rogatien Biaou, noted that the bilateral measures favoured by most donor countries are not satisfactory. In order to facilitate joint programmes of action, both bilateral and multilateral funds will need to be channeled through the GM, Mr. Biaou said.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a central role in implementing the Convention, and their representatives to the meeting said they doubted that NGOs would be able to benefit from a GM that did not have a funding mandate. In a statement, the NGOs urged all participants to demonstrate their commitment by agreeing on a GM that would "effectively mobilize funds, and make a difference in the living conditions of local people in affected areas."

As part of the effort to prevent the desert from engulfing fertile land, eucalyptus seedlings were planted in sand dunes near Lompoul, Senegal.

Mr. Masse Lô of Senegal's Environment and Development Action (ENDA), and the Africa focal point for the International NGO Network on Desertification, told *Africa Recovery* that NGOs will continue to insist on a global funding mechanism to implement the Convention.

"This Convention is a process," Mr. Lô pointed out. "It cannot be implemented through one funding source; action must come from many areas and move in the same direction."

The final decision on the GM was left to the first meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-1), which will take place from 29 September to 10 October in Rome, Italy. African governments and other developing countries, however, are determined to have the issue resolved before COP-1. A series of events were planned to that effect, including a Pan-African ministerial conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, to consolidate Africa's position on various issues relating to the implementation of the Convention.

Noting that the most innovative aspect of the Convention was the recommendation for the involvement of civil society, Mr. Samuel Nyambi, director of UNSO (UN Office to Combat Desertification and Drought), stressed that if affected governments make genuine efforts to ensure the participation of local populations, there will be an incentive for donors to provide resources. He regretted that most developing countries, particularly in Africa, had not moved fast enough in initiating programmes for implementation.

"If the process fails," Mr. Nyambi observed, "who are the losers? The losers are not the governments, donors or UN agencies. The losers are affected populations who have been hearing of meetings and are asking: 'when are we going to see concrete results?' "

The UN Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Nyambi pointed out, has renewed its support for African countries' efforts by providing assistance for Convention-related activities, including the establishment of national desertification funds. UNDP's core resources allocated to support development in developing countries affected by desertification amounted to $1 bn over 1992-96.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), another UN agency involved in the implementation of the Convention, reported that it had committed more than $600 mn for interventions in dryland areas around the world. Both UNDP and IFAD submitted proposals to the INCD offering to host the Global Mechanism. ■

Africa's new man at the UN

by Djibril Diallo

All over Africa, you could feel the excitement as Kofi Annan was sworn in last December as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations. His election was a source of great joy for millions of Africans who feted the day when a sub-Saharan African would now be occupying the coveted seat.

Perhaps the mood was best captured by 53-year-old Ghanaian civics teacher Acquah Mensah, who said, "Now, I can accept that when the UN Charter says 'We the people,' it actually means all the peoples of the world."

The Secretary-General himself has always taken pride in his African roots. But he is also quick to point out that as Secretary-General, his calling is to serve all of humanity and he has set his priorities accordingly. Among the most important is to reform the UN to ensure its continued relevance. Already, he has announced a number of cost-cutting measures, including a planned 1998-1999 budget that will be $123 mn less than the current one, reduction of the staffing level by 1,000 posts and reduction of the organization's administrative costs by a third by the year 2001. He has also streamlined a number of departments, integrating the three departments in the economic and social area, creating a Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. The Department of Public Information is also to become the Office of Communications and Media Services.

The Secretary-General would like to move much more quickly. As he pointed out to a journalist who noted that God had created the earth in less than a week, God did not have to answer to 185 member states, each with its own ideas about how the reforms should proceed.

While reform is topmost on Mr. Annan's agenda, he has also made it clear that Africa will remain a focus of activities. "As I embark on my term of office, I want to strongly reaffirm my intention to ensure that Africa's needs and well-being remain at the top of the international development agenda," he said at the 13th Annual Awards Dinner of the African-American Institute, held in New York in February.

As a practical move, he has appealed to the world's leading business people and industrialists to invest in Africa, noting that Africa's prospects for economic recovery are now greater than ever. He points out that democracy is spreading across the continent and governments are more receptive to the private sector – both domestic and foreign. "There is every hope that Africa, after the failures of the 20th century, will come into its own in the 21st," he said.

At a recent meeting with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, UNDP's Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, Mr. Annan again underscored his special interest in accelerating progress in Africa and fostering peace on the continent. In speech after speech, he has pledged continued efforts by the UN to help end the conflicts in Africa. His envoy, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, is active in trying to negotiate an end to the crisis in Zaire and the Great Lakes region. At the same time, UN peace efforts are continuing in Angola, Liberia and other flashpoints, virtually all of which Mr. Annan had to oversee in his last post as Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations.

The Secretary-General is now some four months into his tenure, but in that time, he has come face to face with both the good and the bad sides of holding such a high office. He now speaks of the "excruciating demand on his time." But he takes comfort in some of the "pleasant surprises" he has seen since taking up the job, particularly the "considerable will and enthusiasm on the part of lots of Member States to cooperate with me and the UN to ensure that we adapt the organization and prepare ourselves for the future."

On the personal level, Mr. Annan says he and his wife have had difficulty adjusting to the lack of freedom and lack of spontaneity. They particularly miss the loss of the "ability of just saying 'I feel like going for a walk, or I want to drop in on a friend' and doing just that."

But Mr. Annan, born in Kumasi, Ghana, in 1938, is more than ready for the long haul. The son of the late H.R. Annan, chief of the Fanti community in Kumasi, he grew up in the courts of the powerful king of the Ashantis where his father served. As one Ghanaian journalist observed, "in Ghana, nobody survives as a chief without skills in management and diplomacy." Indeed, the elder Annan appears to have taught his son well.

Moreover, Mr. Annan's career path from his early days seems to have positioned him for his current position. Over his 30-odd years in the UN system, he had stints in Geneva with the World Health Organization and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in Addis Ababa with the Economic Commission for Africa, and at UN Headquarters in New York where his skills took him to his peace-keeping post.

Secretary-General Annan receives an enthusiastic welcome as he arrives at Cuito airport in Angola on his nine-day trip to Africa.

For those who wonder whether Mr. Annan is the best person to deal with the daunting task of reform and other challenges that lie ahead, they can rest assured that the UN is in the best of hands, as a story related by his mother aptly shows. Talking to reporters several months ago, the Secretary-General's 88-year-old mother, Victoria, said that the young Kofi was a mischievous child who sometimes got into trouble. But then he always managed to get out. That ability to get out of difficult situations may be what the UN needs most at this time. ■

**The African Baobab is one of the world's hardiest trees, thriving in even the most arid environment. It is also the tree under which some Africans traditionally meet to decide issues of common concern.*

AFRICA AGENDA

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

21-24 May 1997, Santiago de Compostela, Spain – Society for International Development (SID), 22nd World Conference. Contact SID World Conference, Barcelona (Spain), fax (34-3) 405-1390, e-mail <v_iberia@jet.es>.

22-24 May, Bordeaux, France – Africa, France and the United States. Conference organized by Centre d'etude d'Afrique noire and the African Studies Centre of Boston University. Contact F. Simonnet, tel (33-05) 5684-4282, fax 5684-4324, e-mail <info@cean.u-bordeaux>.

28-30 May, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire – Annual meetings of the African Development Bank and African Development Fund. Contact tel (225) 204-818, fax 204-006.

4-6 June, Harare, Zimbabwe – Organization of African Unity, annual summit meeting.

23-25 June, Geneva – Pilot seminar on the Mobilization of the Private Sector in order to Encourage Foreign Investment Flows to the Least Developed Countries. Contact UNCTAD, Geneva, tel (41-22) 907-4815, fax 907-0056, e-mail <awni.benham@unctad.org>.

23-25 June, Toronto, Canada – Knowledge for Development, conference hosted by the World Bank and Canada; co-sponsors include Switzerland, US, ECA, UNDP and UNESCO. Contact the World Bank, tel (202) 473-6442, fax 676-0858, e-mail <globalknowledge@worldbank.org>.

23-27 June, New York – Earth Summit + 5, Special Session of the UN General Assembly to Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21.

30 June - 25 July, Geneva – UN Economic and Social Council, substantive session.

14-18 July 1997, Hamburg, Germany – Fifth International Conference on Adult Education to meet on theme "Adult Learning: A Key for the 21st Century." Contact UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, tel (49-40) 448-0410, fax 410-7723, e-mail <uie@unesco.org>.

16 September - December, New York – UN General Assembly, 52nd session.

13-22 October, Antalya, Turkey – 11th World Forestry Congress to meet on theme "Forestry for Sustainable Development: Towards the 21st Century." Contact 11th WFC Organizing Committee, tel (90-312) 417-7724, fax 417-9160, or FAO, Rome, tel (39-6) 522-55088, fax 522-55137, e-mail <luis.botero@fao.org>.

10-11 November, Tokyo – Preparatory meeting for the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II).

WHAT'S TAKEN PLACE

18-20 November 1996, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – Creating an Effective Interface between Civil Society, the Organization of African Unity and Governments in Africa, a conference on conflict resolution in the continent. Contact International Alert, London, tel (44-171) 793-8383, fax (44-171) 793-7975, e-mail <intlalert@gn.apc.org>.

28-29 January, The Hague, The Netherlands – Annual meeting of the European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD). Contact Ted van Hees, Coordinator, EURODAD, Brussels, tel (32-2) 743-8795, fax 736-7271, e-mail <eurodad@knooppunt.be>.

31 March - 3 April, Arusha, Tanzania – First seminar on the protection of the child and elimination of child labour in Africa, organized by the OAU with the ILO, UNICEF and WHO.

6-7 April, New Delhi, India – Non-aligned Movement, 12th ministerial conference.

14 April, Arusha, Tanzania – Summit meeting of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

14-18 April, Dakar, Senegal – Seminar on improving food security in African cities, organized by FAO and the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research.

22-29 April, Washington DC – Spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. Contact tel (202) 623-8357, fax 623-4943.

AFRICA BOOKS

Regional Integration Arrangements in Economic Development: Panacea or Pitfall? by Percy S. Mistry (Forum on Debt and Development (FONDAD), The Hague; 1996; 98 pp.; $15)

Regionalism and the Global Economy: The Case of Africa, ed. Jan Joost Teunissen (FONDAD, The Hague; 1996; 312 pp.; $27)

North Africa: Development and Reform in a Changing Global Economy, ed. Dirk Wandewalle (St. Martin's Press, New York; 1996; 286 pp.; $49.95)

Au-delà de Lomé IV: Pistes de réflexion sur l'avenir de la coopération ACP-UE. Rapport ECDPM numero 6 (European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht, The Netherlands; 1996; 99 pp.)

Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System by Barry Eichengreen (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, US; 1996; 232 pp.; $24.95)

Population, Food and Nutrition by William Bender and Margaret Smith (Population Reference Bureau, Washington; 1997; $8.50)

Hazards and Opportunities – Farming Livelihoods in Dryland Africa: Lessons from Zimbabwe by Ian Scoones, Chinaniso Chibudi et al (Zed Books, London; 1996; 288 pp.; $25 pb, $69.95 hb)

The Legal Status of Women and Poverty in Tanzania by Magdalena K. Rwebangira (Research Report of the Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden; 1996; 58 pp.)

Adjustment and Agriculture in Africa: Farmers, the State and the World Bank in Guinea by Jennifer Clapp (Macmillan Press, London; 1997; 192 pp.; £40)

Africa's Choices: After Thirty Years of the World Bank by Michael Barratt Brown (Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, US; 1996; 433 pp.; $75 hb, $18.95 pb)

Agenda for Africa's Economic Renewal by Benno Ndulu, Nicolas van de Walle, et al (Transaction Publishers (for the British Overseas Development Council), New Brunswick, New Jersey, US; 1996; 246 pp.; $32.95 hb, $17.95 pb)

Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere, eds. Colin Legum and Geoffrey Mwari (Africa World Press, Trenton, New Jersey, US; 1995; 205 pp; $45.95 hb, $16.95 pb)

What is Africa's Problem? by Yoweri K. Museveni with foreword by Julius K. Nyerere (NRM Publications, Kampala, Uganda; 1992; 278 pp.; $10)

Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda by Yoweri K. Museveni (Macmillan, London; 1997; 224 pp.)

State Building and Democracy in Southern Africa: Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa by Pierre du Toit (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington; D.C.; 1995; 384 pp.; $37.50 hb, $19.95 pb)

Protecting Human Rights in Africa: Strategies and Roles of Non-governmental Organizations by Claude W. Welch, Jr. (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US; 1995; 356 pp.; $39.95)

Canada and Southern Africa after Apartheid: Foreign Aid and Civil Society, eds. Larry A. Swatuk and David R. Black (Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada; 1996; 145 pp; $10)

Southern Africa and Africa after Apartheid: Security Issues, eds. David R. Black and Larry A. Swatuk (Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada; 1996; 138 pp; $10)

Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail by Fen Osler Hampson (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington; 1996; 320 pp.; $32.95 hb, $19.95 pb)

Orphan of the Cold War: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angola Peace Process, 1992-93 by Margaret Joan Anstee (Former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Angola) (St. Martin's Press, New York; 1996; 566 pp.; $45)

United Nations Blue Books Series

Each volume with an introduction by then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (United Nations, New York)

The United Nations and Mozambique, 1992-1995 (1995; 321 pp.; $29.95)

The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996 (1996; 516 pp.; $29.95)

The United Nations and Rwanda, 1993-1996 (1996; 739 pp.; $29.95)

The United Nations and the Independence of Eritrea (1996; 275 pp.; $29.95)

The United Nations and Human Rights, 1945-1995 (1995; 536 pp.; $29.95)

The United Nations and the Advancement of Women, 1945-1996 (1996; 846 pp.; $49.95)

AFRICA IN BRIEF

Japan to host second Africa conference (TICAD II) in 1998

The second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) will be held in the Japanese capital in late 1998, preceded by a preparatory meeting from 10-11 November 1997. The conferences are co-sponsored by the Japanese government, the UN and the Global Coalition for Africa.

TICAD I, held in 1993, was organized against a backdrop of declining international interest and a perceived marginalization of Africa, said Mr. Seigi Hinata, Deputy Director-General of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau in Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The conference adopted the Tokyo Declaration identifying broad areas of effort needed to accelerate African development.

These areas included political and economic reforms, strengthening the private sector, regional cooperation and integration, emergency relief, learning from the Asian experience and international cooperation. Building on some of these themes, TICAD II will aim to produce an action-oriented agenda for African development towards the 21st century. Like its predecessor, TICAD II will not be an aid-pledging conference, Mr. Hinata said.

The preparatory meeting later this year will review progress made since TICAD I, select the main themes for the agenda for action and discuss the framework and organization of TICAD II. African and Asian countries will participate in both meetings, alongside non-governmental, international and regional organizations. ■

Rains end Kenya drought; floods in Malawi, Mozambique

Recent rains brought an end to Kenya's second major drought crisis in five years which, earlier this year, left as many as 2 million people in need of famine relief. At the same time, heavy rains in Malawi and Mozambique have resulted in more than 1.2 million people needing emergency assistance.

According to the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), the severe drought in northern and eastern Kenya followed poor rains in 1995 as well as below average precipitation during the March-June 1996 rainy season. The Kenyan government declared a drought emergency in late January and has issued an appeal for international assistance.

In addition, an outbreak of rinderpest, a highly contagious and lethal disease that affects cattle and wild animals such as buffaloes and giraffes, has spread dramatically in Kenya and has crossed the border into Tanzania. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) called the outbreak the worst in 15 years and said the drought has aggravated the situation as pastoralists move their animals off traditional rangelands in search of grazing.

FAO termed the spread of rinderpest into Tanzania "a matter of great socio-economic and ecological concern, threatening the wildlife reserves of Ngorongoro and Serengeti as well as the livestock in southern Tanzania and beyond."

In Malawi, DHA said unusually heavy rains in January and February caused floods in the lower Shire Valley, affecting about 900,000 people in Malawi and another 300,000 across the border in Mozambique. The governments of both countries have issued emergency appeals to bring assistance to the affected populations. ■

UNCTAD trust fund to boost trading capacity of LDCs

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has established a trust fund to help the world's 48 least developed countries (LDCs) – 34 of which are in Africa – integrate into the global economy. UNCTAD has set an initial $5 mn target for the LDC trust fund, which will be used to help strengthen export supply capacities of LDCs by supporting trade policy reforms, trade diversification, and financial and fiscal sector reforms.

India and the Republic of Korea have pledged $100,000 each for the fund, while the Republic of Korea has also agreed to earmark one-third of its $3 mn contribution for UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities.

Commenting on the initial pledges, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero said "it is heartening that even in times of domestic budget stringency, the international community translates into action its concern, expressed at various UN conferences, regarding the risk of the weaker countries becoming increasingly marginalized in a globalizing economy."

According to UNCTAD, an innovative aspect of the trust fund is that it is to be funded not only by traditional donors, but also by developing countries, and potentially by least developed countries themselves. UNCTAD also will seek financing for the fund from non-governmental organizations, foundations and private companies. ■

Donors commit $485 mn in pledges for IFAD

After several years of delays, donors agreed in February to commit $485 mn for a new three-year financial replenishment for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN's main agency for aiding poor farmers. In the last replenishment in 1989, for $567 mn, members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) contributed about 40 per cent of the funds, while the industrialized countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) gave 60 per cent.

Agreement on a new replenishment, originally to have been completed in 1992, was delayed by demands by the OECD for a greater decision-making role, in return for higher OECD pledges to offset declining OPEC contributions. In the new agreement, OECD countries will give $376 mn, OPEC will contribute $45-50 mn and non-oil developing countries have pledged $60 mn. While previously each group of countries held one-third of the votes on IFAD's Governing Council, the OECD share is to be increased, although OPEC and the other developing countries will still hold a majority.

Despite the delays in the replenishment, IFAD has committed $1.78 bn to 150 projects since 1992, drawing on its investment income and loan interest and repayment. ■

WHO appeals for $6.3 mn to combat meningitis

With a record number of meningitis cases and deaths recorded in Africa last year, a $6.3 mn interagency appeal has been launched to respond to the threat of an epidemic in 15 at-risk countries in 1997. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 150,000 cases of meningitis that resulted in 16,000 deaths, mainly children, were reported in 1996 in the "meningitis belt" that stretches from Senegal to Ethiopia.

Funds brought in by the appeal, which was launched by WHO together with other UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and technical partners under an International Coordinating Group (IGC) established in January, will be used to purchase vaccine and antibiotics and to help combat meningitis outbreaks. The IGC already has obtained commitments from manufacturers to reserve some 14 million doses of vaccine in 1997 for the meningitis control programme. ■

Reforms aim to sharpen focus on food security at FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is being "radically changed" through a restructuring process that has been under way for the past three years, said Mr. Jacques Diouf, the UN organization's Director-General. "FAO is in the process of implementing what can only be termed as broad-based, fundamental reform," he told a 19 February news conference called to unveil a special report on the organization's reform efforts.

"FAO was too centralized, with too high a proportion of staff at headquarters," the report bluntly declared. "It lacked focus, with too many fragmented and diffuse efforts; it was encumbered with overly bureaucratic procedures...." Since 1994, FAO has cut 563 posts at headquarters and 63 in country offices, while staffing of regional, subregional and liaison offices has risen by 170 (many of them nationals replacing international programme staff). ■

Growth alone won't end poverty, says World Bank

At current economic growth rates it will take 50 years to double incomes in sub-Saharan Africa, but even such an increase is "not even remotely adequate for meaningful poverty reduction," according to *Taking Action for Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa*, a report published recently by the World Bank.

In order to reduce the number of poor in the region, the Bank report recommends growth rates of 6.5 to 7.0 per cent per year. However, it warns that "relying on aggregate income growth as the sole means for reducing poverty in Africa will effectively postpone significant poverty reduction for the poorest for up to 50 years."

The report points out that it is time for the World Bank to focus on poverty alleviation, rather than on aggregate growth. Africa, the report notes, has the lowest "growth elasticity" in the world, with growth in national income having very little effect on overall poverty rates. In order to improve growth elasticity, development assistance from the World Bank must be invested in rural areas where the largest proportions of the poor live. Rural development "may not contribute as much to aggregate growth as investing in a higher potential region," the report says. "But such actions may be the only ones available to reduce poverty efficiently and sustainably."

In addition, greater investment in health and education is needed to boost the level of growth elasticity. Besides benefiting the poor directly, health and education programmes help the poor benefit more from aggregate economic growth.

Finally the report recommends a focus on democratization and the empowerment of civil society. Without a stable social situation, it is impossible to achieve high rates of economic growth, the report says.

The report's author, Mr. Jack van Holst Pellekan, told *Africa Recovery* that he sees no inherent conflict between specific pro-poor policies, such as health and education programmes, and the aggregate growth policies needed to achieve the recommended high growth rates. "In the short term there might be some trade-offs between pro-poor programmes and structural adjustment programmes," said Mr. Pellekan. "But in the long term aggregate growth will be beneficial to poverty reduction programmes."

Mr. Pellekan did admit there is nothing fundamentally new in the World Bank approach to poverty reduction. "Structural adjustment programmes have been very successful," he said. "This report simply says that we need higher growth rates than previously believed, and that we need to improve already existing poverty reduction strategies."

Mr. Tony Avirgan, communication coordinator for the Washington-based Development Group for Alternative Policies, disagreed with this conclusion. "Structural adjustment programmes are doing enormous harm. The Bank has tried to create safety nets to reduce the negative effects of its programmes, but there is no evidence that it is pursuing actual pro-poor policies." Although Mr. Avirgan accused the poverty reduction strategies of the Bank as being "mere rhetoric," he acknowledged that "talk in itself can be good, and might eventually lead to action."

— Peter Svarre

Northern and Southern Africa post fertility rate declines

Accelerating a trend that began in the 1980s, women in both northern and Southern Africa are having fewer children. According to a report of the UN Secretary-General summarizing the 1996 update to the UN's *World Population Prospects*, the number of births per woman fell from 4.8 in 1985-90 to 4.1 in 1990-95 in northern Africa, a decline of 26.8 per cent, and from 4.5 to 4.2 in Southern Africa, a decline of 14.3 per cent. In all other regions of Africa, the total fertility rate was 6.4 in 1990-95, slightly below the figures for 1985-90.

Overall, Africa's population growth rate averaged 2.7 per cent annually in 1990-95, by far the highest in the world. Even if this growth rate is reduced to 1.1 per cent by the years 2045-50, Africa's projected population will rise to 2.1 billion by 2050, three times the level in 1995. ■

South Africa and Mozambique ban the use of landmines

South Africa and Mozambique announced unilateral decisions to end the manufacture, trade, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines during a 25-28 February international conference in Maputo, Mozambique, which called for a Southern Africa free of landmines.

The fourth in a series of annual international meetings, the Maputo conference was organized by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, a coalition of over 650 non-governmental organizations in 35 countries. At a follow-up 9-10 April meeting in Harare, a regional coordination committee, with one representative from each of the 12 members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), was set up to work on getting all SADC members to agree to a draft landmine ban treaty at a December 1997 conference to be hosted by Canada. The committee also aims for the elimination of landmines from the region.

Of the estimated 110 mn landmines buried in 70 countries – which maim or kill over 20,000 victims each year – over a third are in 21 African countries, 15 mn of them in Angola alone, 3 mn in Mozambique, and 1 mn each in Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia. ■

AFRICA WATCH

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Growth rates of 5 per cent or more in 18 African countries

Gross domestic product (GDP) in 18 African countries grew by 5 per cent or more in 1996, while Africa's overall GDP growth rose from under 3 per cent in 1995 to over 4 per cent, said a report by the UN Secretary-General.

The World Economy at the Beginning of 1997, prepared by the Secretary-General for the UN Economic and Social Council, listed higher international commodity prices and better weather among the reasons for the strong performance. These factors contributed to strong growth in the primary product sectors, while increased exports of minerals and agricultural products also had beneficial effects on domestic demand and output. Some of this growth should be considered "a temporary phenomenon," the report pointed out, arguing that to sustain growth in sectors other than the primary, Africa requires continued reform efforts. ■

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Sudan avoids expulsion from Fund over debt arrears

Threatened with expulsion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for failing to make debt payments, Sudan has agreed to a tough, 10-month economic stabilization programme which aims to enable the resumption of regular debt payments and prevent $1.7 bn in arrears on IMF loans from rising.

With monthly monitoring by the IMF, programme targets include gross domestic product (GDP) growth from 4.7 per cent to 4.9 per cent by the end of 1997 and lower inflation (from 118 to 65 per cent). Other programme targets include a budget deficit down from 3.4 per cent of GDP to 1 per cent; central bank lending down from $1.5 bn to $500 mn; and a narrower gap between the exchange rates in the official and the parallel markets.

Sudan was suspended from the IMF in 1993 with debt arrears to the Fund of $1.6 bn. The country's 1996 external debt totaled $20 bn, approximately 270 per cent of GDP. ■

APPOINTMENTS

Since taking office, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has made new appointments in areas of particular importance to Africa.

UN / M. Grant

Mr. Bernard Miyet *(France) succeeds Mr. Annan as Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Miyet was France's Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Vienna). Prior to that he was France's Ambassador-at-large for the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, as well as for audio-visual matters (1993-94); and Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations Office in Geneva (1991-93).*

UN / M. Grant

Sir Kieran Prendergast *(United Kingdom) is the new Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, whose department has primary responsibility for preventive diplomacy and peace-making. Sir Kieran (left) was UK Ambassador to Turkey since 1995, and before that UK High Commissioner in Kenya (1992-95) and Zimbabwe (1989-92).*

Mr. Ibrahima Fall *(Senegal) has been named Assistant Secretary-General the Department of Political Affairs. He was Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Director of the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva since 1992 and also Secretary-General of the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna. As Senegal's Foreign Minister at the time, Mr. Fall (right) was spokesman and ministerial coordinator for Africa during the 1986 UN General Assembly special session on the continent's economic crisis.*

UN / M. Tzovaras

Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai *(India) now heads the single department created by consolidating the three former departments dealing with economic and social issues: Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD); Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis; and Development Support and Management Services. Mr. Desai headed DPCSD from 1992 and was Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (1990-92). He was Senior Economic Adviser for the World Commission on Environment and Development (1985-87) and also served in the government of India in various capacities, including as Secretary of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.*

UN

Mr. Mohamed Sahnoun *(Algeria), who in 1992 served as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Somalia, has been appointed as United Nations/Organization of African Unity Special Representative for the Great Lakes region of Africa. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Sahnoun was Special Adviser to the Director-General of UNESCO for the Culture of Peace Programme. He was also a member of the Special Advisory Group of the War-torn Societies Project, a joint endeavour of the UN Research Institute for Social Development and the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva. Mr. Sahnoun has been Algeria's ambassador to Morocco, the US, the UN, and the Federal Republic of Germany; Deputy Secretary-General of the OAU; Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; and Secretary to the Arab Maghreb Union.*

AGRICULTURE

Ethiopian grain headed to drought victims in Kenya

In "a remarkable turnaround," the UN World Food Programme (WFP) says, Ethiopia is selling some 7,450 tonnes of maize and beans to WFP for delivery to drought victims in Kenya (see page 30). Ethiopia suffered roughly a decade of severe food shortages but is set to reach a cereal production peak of 11.1 million tonnes in the 1996/97 crop year, 17 per cent more than in 1995/96, reports the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Although pests and poor rains have caused shortages in regions with a history of food deficits, food aid needs in 1997 could be 60 per cent less than last year. Much of this will be bought locally, as was done in 1996 with 80 per cent of food aid. ■

STOP PRESS

Johnson Sirleaf resigns from UNDP

Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Assistant Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Director of its Regional Bureau for Africa since 1992, has resigned in order to run for President of Liberia. Her replacement was yet to be announced as we went to press.